

THURROCK SCHOOLS' FORUM

13th March 2025 at 10:00 – 12:00

Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

AGENDA

Multi Academy Trusts

The Gateway Learning Community Trust (GLC)
Catalyst Academies Trust
Harris Federation
Ormiston Park Academy
Mossbourne Federation
Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust
REAch2 Academy Trust
South West Essex Community Education Trust
Vine Schools Trust
Christus Catholic Trust

Name

Mrs V Reid (Chair)
Mr T Parfett (Vice Chair)
Mrs N Graham
Mr A Whiles
Ms Claire Lane-Craig.
Mr Griffiths
Mr E Samuel
Mr S Munday
Mrs E Wigmore
Mrs J Seymour

Secondary Voluntary Aided School

Grays Convent

Name

Mrs P Johnson

Standalone Academy Trusts

Woodside Academy
Giffards Primary

Name

Mr S Proctor
Mrs N Haslam-Davis

Infrastructure Groups

TASS
TPHA

Name

Mr S Bell
Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes

Alternative Provision

Olive AP

Name

Mr M Vickers

Special Schools

Treetops Academy
Beacon Hill Academy

Name

Mr J Brewer
Mrs Sue Hewitt

Non-school members

Diocese of Chelmsford
Diocese of Brentwood
0-5 EYFS Representative
0-11 Representative
11-19 Representative

Name

Miss S Jones
G Corry
Mr A Melbourne
Ms A Jones
Mr S Bowak

THURROCK SCHOOLS' FORUM

13th March 2025 at 10:00 – 12:00

Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Introductory Items		
Item	Item	Time Guide
1.	Welcome from Chair	10:00
2.	Apologies for Absence Ms S Williams Mrs E Wigmore	10:02
3.	Introductions New Member - Representing Ormiston Park Academy Mr Aron Whiles	10:05
4.	<i>For decision</i> Dedicated Schools Grant – 2024/25 Finance Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented by David May	10:15
5.	<i>For decision</i> Dedicated Schools Grant –2025/26 Finance Report & Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented by David May	10:25
6.	<i>For decision</i> Permanent Exclusions funding arrangements 2025/26 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented by Michele Lucas	10:55
7.	<i>For decision</i> Union Facility time <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented by Andrea Winstone	11:05

THURROCK SCHOOLS' FORUM

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8.	<i>For discussion</i> Tuition Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented by Andrea Winstone	11:10
9.	<i>For information</i> Thurrock Budget – Children's Services (presentation) <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented by David May	11:30
10.	<i>For information</i> Review of Forward Plan 2024/25 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kayleigh Swan presenting	11:40
Closing Items		
11.	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th January 2025	11.45
12.	Action Log	11:50
13.	Any Other Business	11:55
	Date of next meeting Thursday 12 th June 2025	

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 13 March 2025
SUBJECT: Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25
REPORT OF: David May
THE REPORT IS: For Decision

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant is forecasting an outturn position of £1.726m (3%) overspend, against a revised budget of £61.870m.
- 1.2 The movement to reserves of £1.726m will change the surplus position of £0.630m to a deficit of £1.096m. This was planned to support identified funding pressures in the High Needs Block in 2024/25, whilst benefits from the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme are realised.
- 1.3 There continues to be significant risk within the High Needs Block:
 - Continued increase in demand for EHCP's; and
 - Sufficiency of local offer to prevent high-cost external placements.
- 1.4 The Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan is being refreshed as part of the High Needs Block 2025/26 and is a separate item on today's agenda.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Schools Forum is invited to:
 - a) Note and seek clarity on the contents of the report.

3. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

3.1 To inform members of the Schools Forum of the projected outturn position in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2024/25, in accordance with the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.

4. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2024/25

4.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant is forecasting an outturn position of £1.726m (3%) overspend, against a revised budget of £61.870m, as shown below:

Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25	School Block £m	Central Services Block £m	High Needs Block £m	Early Years Block £m	Total £m
Funding Settlement	167.156	1.633	38.888	22.468	230.145
Academy Recoupment	(161.025)		(7.250)		(168.275)
Funding Block Transfer	(0.400)		0.400		0.000
Final DSG	5.731	1.633	32.038	22.468	61.870
Forecasted Outturn	5.148	1.627	34.501	22.320	63.596
Variance to Budget	(0.583)	(0.006)	2.463	(0.148)	1.726
Previously reported variance (Jan-25)	(0.583)	(0.006)	2.190	(0.149)	1.452
Movement from previously reported	(0.000)	(0.000)	0.273	0.001	0.274

Appendix A provides further detail on the key areas of expenditure.

4.2 The net overspend is driven by:

- Top Up Funding Academies - £0.726m. Continued increase in EHCP Plan and support required to maintain places in mainstream schools and academies.
- Expansion of places available within Special Schools at a cost of £0.503m.
- Post 16 - £0.782m. Increase in the number of young people requiring support – Colleges £0.431m, Tuition £0.303m and Out of Borough placements £0.048m.
- Out of Borough Placements an overspend of £0.534m. This includes three joint funded placements agreed in the spring term with a full year cost implication to the DSG of £0.528m.
- Medical Tuition - £0.317m, continued demand for tuition services.

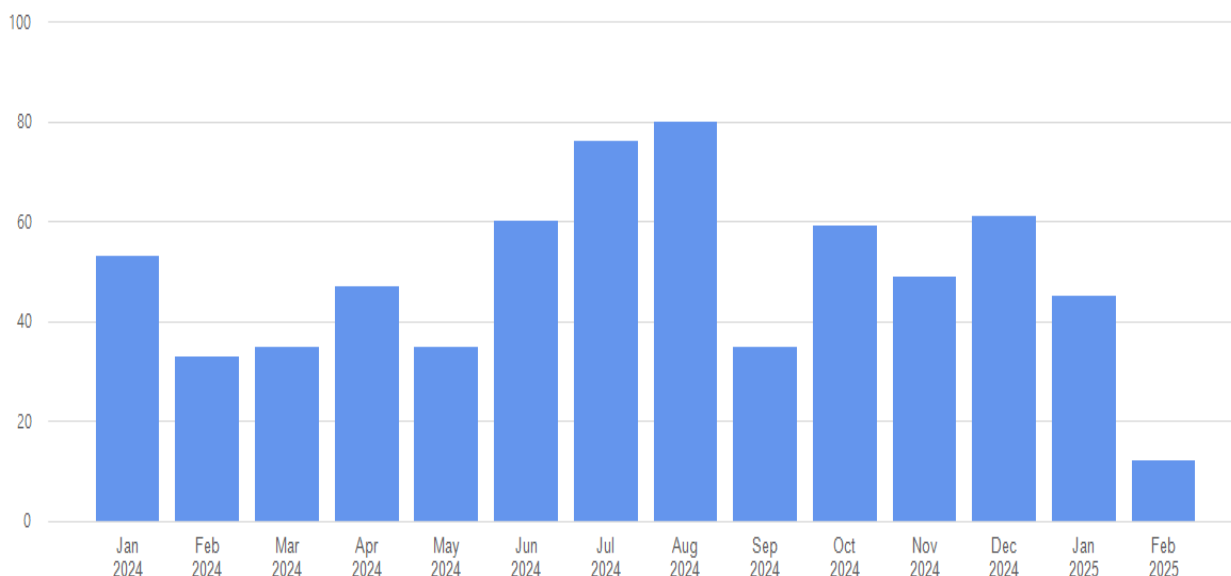
Offset by:

- Delay in the opening of Primary Autism Resource base to Oct-24, a saving of £0.098m.
- Delay in opening of the new SEMH - OA North View provision, a saving of £0.347m.
- Growth £0.583m, includes contingency for bulge classes to open January 2025.
- Early Years central team, saving £0.148m reflects current payroll structure, includes grants received to offset salaries.

4.3 At this stage in the financial year no additional risks are known or included.

4.4 The table below shows the significant increase in the number of requests for assessment of EHCP. Thurrock currently maintains 2,518 which is 6% of the school age population. This is higher than the national of average of 4% and statistical neighbours of 4%. A reviews has been commissioned on EHCPs in Thurrock to gain a better understanding as to why Thurrock is higher.

EHCP Requests between January 2024 to date.



	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Total
Total	53	33	35	47	35	60	76	80	35	59	49	61	45	12	680

5. DSG RESERVE

5.1 The movement to reserves of £1.726m will change the surplus position of £0.630m to a deficit of £1.096m. This was planned to support identified funding pressures in the High Needs Block in 2024/25, whilst benefits from the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme are realised.

DSG Reserve - Summary	£m
DSG Unusable Reserve at the end of 2021/22	1.883
DSG Usable Reserve	(2.513)
DSG Balance 31/03/2024	(0.630)
DSG Outturn 2024/25	1.726
DSG Projected Balance @ 31/03/2025	1.096

5.2 The Government extended the DSG statutory override in December 2022 for a one-off period of three years up to 31 March 2026. When the statutory override falls away, the accumulated DSG deficit will be the responsibility of each Local Authority.

5.3 The engagement in the SEND Delivering Better Value programme is designed to support Local Authorities in the management of the Dedicated Schools Grants. The DSG Management Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29 submitted, validated, and approved through the DBV programme shows an accumulated deficit of £17m in March 2029.

5.4 The approved plan showed a forecasted deficit for 2024/25 of £2.364m. The position at Period 10 is a deficit of £1.726m. This is an improved in-year position of £0.638m.

5.5 A long-term solution is required to funding available to support Schools and the High Needs Block.

6. Delivering Better Value in SEND programme

6.1 The Delivering Better Value in SEND programme aims to support LA's to improve delivery of SEND services for children and young people while ensuring services are sustainable.

6.2 Thurrock grant application was approved by DfE DBV Programme Board on 29 February 2024. Quarterly returns and discussions are held with the DfE. The outline plan is shown below, with expenditure to date and forecasted Q4 of 2024/25:

Thurrock DBV: Use of Grant

Workstream & Area	Impact	Total Expenditure to date	Q4 Budget	Expenditure and Q4 Budget
Workstream 1 - Improving mainstream capacity and ability to meet needs of children and young people at SEND Support and with EHCPs.	Primary - Training	£153,321	£158,679	£312,000
	Secondary - Training	£54,000	£102,000	£156,000
	Thurrock - Training	£21,246	£60,754	£82,000
Workstream 2a - Improving mainstream capacity and ability to meet needs of children and young people at SEND Support and with EHCPs.	Primary Outreach	£120,000	£60,000	£180,000
	Secondary Outreach	£80,000	£40,000	£120,000
Workstream 2b - Review of Outreach services to prioritise and mainstream year 1 investment	SEND specialist engaged to review and prioritise outreach offer.	£75,000	£0	£75,000
Workstream 3 - Reducing the high INMSS placement costs	Increase to commissioning capacity to ensure VFM being secured.	£75,000	£0	£75,000
Total		£578,567	£421,433	£1,000,000

6.3 Workstream 1 – Schools have submitted training plans and update on outcomes. The next deadline on receipt of the progress report will allow the final payment to be made in 2024/25 for Summer 2025. This will align with the next submission to the DfE.

6.4 Workstream 2a – Olive AP and The Osborne Academy Trust have developed a new outreach offer to reduce the number of fixed term exclusions and suspensions. All schools who have been supported through the outreach in autumn term, to date, report improvements with the pupil's engagement and behaviour in school. There have been no permanent exclusions in this group and no pupils in this group have been taken to Inclusion Panel for further intervention.

- 6.5 Workstream 2b - A review of outreach provision was commissioned in Spring term. This has identified strengths and ways to strengthen the outreach offer. All outreach providers engaged well with the commissioned review. Recommendations have been discussed with outreach providers. This has influenced 2025/26 commissioned priorities and budget.
- 6.6 Workstream 3 – A review of INMSS placement costs. Commissioning hosted an event in early spring. This was a multiagency collaboration to redesign an improved approach to supporting YP with additional needs towards further independence. A separate event for young people will be hosted later in the spring term.

A detailed commissioning plan will be developed following these events.

- Build additional negotiation into process.
- Implement standardised approach to cost breakdowns in order to better inform negotiation.
- New proportionate approach has been designed and will soon be implemented
- Approach includes clear info about how and when to escalate concerns.
- Will be led by new post of QA Officer – when in post (due by end of financial year).

7. DSG Management Plan 2024/25

- 7.1 The DSG Management plan had been updated to reflect the latest projected outturn position and the ongoing financial implications into future years. This is to be discussed as part of the DSG 2025/26 agenda item.

8. REFERENCES TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS / PREVIOUS REPORTS

- School Forum meeting 16-01-25 - Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 & 2025/26
- School Forum meeting 28-11-24 - Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 & 2025/26
- School Forum Meeting 16-01-24 - Dedicated Schools Grant 2023/24 & 2024/25

9. CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact.

Name: David May
Role: Head of Strategic Finance Business Partnering, Corporate Finance
E-Mail: dmay@thurrock.gov.uk

Appendix A

Dedicated Schools Grant		2023/24 Outturn	2024/25 Budget	2024/25 Projected Outturn	2024/25 Variance
		£m	£m	£m	£m
SB	Schools Block	155.651	166.756	166.173	(0.583)
CSSB	Central Services Block	1.608	1.633	1.627	(0.006)
HNB	High Needs Block	37.165	39.288	41.750	2.462
EYB	Early Years Block	13.987	22.468	22.319	(0.148)
Dedicated Schools Grant Funding Settlement		208.411	230.145	231.870	1.725
Less Academy Recoupment		(157.667)	(168.275)	(168.275)	0.000
Dedicated Schools Grant Received		(51.908)	(61.870)	(61.870)	0.000
(Under) / Overspend		(1.163)	0.000	1.726	1.726
SB	Maintained Schools Budgets	4.018	4.454	4.454	0.000
SB	Growth Fund	0.993	1.277	0.694	(0.583)
CSSB	Statutory and Regulatory duties - Education	0.544	0.511	0.511	0.000
CSSB	Statutory and Regulatory duties - Finance	0.159	0.174	0.174	0.000
CSSB	School Place planning	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.000
CSSB	Admissions	0.301	0.301	0.301	0.000
CSSB	Schools Forum	0.006	0.009	0.009	0.000
CSSB	SACRE	0.010	0.015	0.015	0.000
CSSB	School Licences	0.154	0.195	0.190	(0.006)
CSSB	Contribution to Combined budgets	0.406	0.400	0.400	0.000
HNB	Place Funding	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
HNB	Top Up Funding - Thurrock Academies	3.771	4.535	5.261	0.726
HNB	Top Up Funding - Thurrock Resource Provisions	4.077	4.672	4.573	(0.098)
HNB	Top Up Funding - Thurrock Special Schools	7.375	7.871	8.374	0.503
HNB	Top Up Funding - Thurrock Alternative Provision	1.865	2.265	1.895	(0.370)
HNB	Top Up Funding - Other Local Authorities (4-16)	1.549	1.385	1.623	0.238
HNB	Top Up Funding - Post 16	2.563	2.491	3.273	0.782
HNB	Pupils not in School	0.617	0.540	0.466	(0.074)
HNB	Medical Tuition	0.419	0.193	0.510	0.317
HNB	Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	1.841	1.854	1.854	0.000
HNB	Non Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	2.118	2.155	2.451	0.296
HNB	Commissioned Services	1.185	1.245	1.245	0.000
HNB	Additional High Needs Targeted	0.550	0.600	0.790	0.190
HNB	Home Hospital Education Services	0.042	0.030	0.000	(0.030)
HNB	Travellers Team	0.050	0.052	0.053	0.000
HNB	Home to School Transport	1.600	1.600	1.600	0.000
HNB	High Needs Central Team	0.515	0.500	0.500	0.000
HNB	SEND DBV	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
HNB	Year 11s	0.000	0.050	0.033	(0.017)
EYB	3&4 Year old	11.732	13.700	13.700	0.000
EYB	2 year olds Disadvantaged	1.923	2.117	2.117	0.000
EYB	2 year olds Working parents	0.000	3.445	3.445	(0.000)
EYB	Under 2 Year olds	0.000	2.570	2.570	(0.000)
EYB	Expansion of the EY offer	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
EYB	Early Years Central Team	0.332	0.635	0.487	(0.148)
Dedicated Schools Grant		50.744	61.870	63.595	1.725

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 13 March 2025
SUBJECT: Dedicated Schools Grant 2025/26
REPORT OF: David May
THE REPORT IS: For Decision

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block has identified risks within the budget of £3.731m. This is shown with the updated DSG Management Plan.
- 1.2 This reflects the significant risk within the High Needs Block:
- Continued increase in demand for EHCP's and complexity of need.
 - Increase in post-16 student numbers
 - Increase in tuition provided and
 - Sufficiency of local offer to prevent high-cost external placements.
- 1.3 The SEND Local Offer and Strategic Planning Group needs to maintain strategic focus. It is important that the membership, remit and workplan is considered.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Schools Forum is invited to:
- a) Note and seek clarity on the contents of the report.
 - b) Approve the HNB 2025/26 budget that includes
 - Hourly rate to be paid of £13.30
 - Increase in Band Values as outlined within the report
 - Commissioned Outreach budget of £1.404m
 - c) To consider the membership, remit and workplan of the SEND Local Offer and Strategic Planning Group.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 This report provides details of the Dedicated Schools Grant budget for 2025/26.
- 3.2 This reports highlights the key areas of change within the High Needs Block budget. At the meeting a presentation will be made on all key issues and decisions required to finalise the 2025/26 DSG budget

4. Dedicated Schools Grant 2025/26

- 4.1 On 18 December 2024, Department for Education announced the schools funding settlement for 2025/26, reflecting the outcome of the October 2024 school census. The Dedicated Schools Grant to be received by Thurrock in 2025/26, before academy recoupment, is shown in the table below:

Dedicated Schools Grant	2024/25	2025/26	Increase
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	167.156	180.524	13.368
Central School Services Block	1.610	1.598	(0.012)
High Needs Block	39.083	41.870	2.787
Early Years Block	22.127	30.192	8.065
Total	229.977	254.184	24.207

- 4.2 The key headline announcements are:
- Funding for mainstream schools in DSG will increase by 2.15% per pupil, this includes existing funding and full year impact of the 2024 pay award.
 - On high needs, the average funding increase is 9% in cash terms, with local authority-level increases between 7% and 10% per person aged 2-18.
 - Alongside the Dedicated Schools Grant, councils will receive a separate core schools budget grant to pass on to special schools and alternative provision to continue funding costs of 2024 teachers' pay and pension and other staff increases.
 - Around £8 billion will be allocated for early years settings through core funding rates. No significant changes have been made to the funding methodology from 2024/25, other than including the expansion of the 2-year-old and under 2s working parent entitlements to 30-hours, which will be available from September 2025.

Schools Block

- 4.3 The Local funding formula was presented at the January meeting. Thurrock, for the first time, had been able to apply the National Funding Formula and Area Cost Adjustment in full. This was enabled by £0.308m being transferred out of the Growth Fund allocation.
- 4.4 Following the meeting the APT (local funding formula) was submitted to the Department for Education for approval.
- 4.5 On the 13 February 2025 the DfE confirmed that the authority's adherence to the finance regulations and proforma appear to meet the required criteria, and we would like to thank you for the work done to achieve this.

Central School Services Block

4.6 This funding block is subject to a 20% year on year reduction to historic commitments. School Forum Members agree the following budgets in January.

Central Schools Services Block	Budget 2024/25 £m	Budget 2025/26 £m
Statutory and Regulatory Duties - Education	£0.511	£0.530
Statutory and Regulatory Duties - Finance	£0.174	£0.177
School Place Planning	£0.027	£0.027
School Admissions	£0.301	£0.301
Servicing of Schools forum	£0.009	£0.009
SACRE	£0.015	£0.015
School Licensing	£0.195	£0.204
Contribution to Combined budgets	£0.400	£0.335
Total DSG - Central Services Block	£1.633	£1.598

High Needs Block

4.7 In 2025/26 the High Needs Block funding has an allocation of £41.870m, an increase of £2.787m (7.13%). Whilst the increase is welcome, Thurrock continues to experience high level of demand for Specialist places and Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP).

4.8 In 2025/26, the expansion of the local offer will increase commissioned numbers for the academic year to 904, an increase of 81. This reflects planned expansion of Primary Autism, Secondary SEMH and Specialist provision. The new DSG Management Plan forecasts this number to increase to 992 by 2029/30. This reflects forecasted demand in Secondary Autism and Special schools.

Hourly Rate

4.9 In last year’s DSG Management Plan, the calculation was based on:

- 99% of EHCP paid at 9 hours and 1% paid at 34 hours

Current data shows

- 97% of EHCP paid at 12 hours and 3% paid at 35 hours

The new Management Plan has used actual hours paid and increased this by 10% per annum reflecting current EHCP increase.

4.10 The proposal is to increase the hourly rate paid for EHCP’s from September 2025 as shown in the table below:

Year	DSG Mgmt. Plan 2024/25	DSG Mgmt. Plan 2025/26 Updated
2024/25	£11.00	£11.00
2025/26	£11.25	£11.30
2026/27	£11.50	£11.60
2027/28	£11.75	£11.90

2028/29	£12.00	£12.20
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4.11 This has a cost implication of £7.311m reflecting the increase in the number of EHCP's, the hours awarded, and the hourly rate paid.

Band Values

4.12 For the academic year 2025/26, a 3% uplift has been applied to all Resource Band Values.

THURROCK BAND VALUES					
Increase in Band values to be applied from start of new Academic year					
Band Descriptor	Band Value 2024/25	Place Funding	MPPG	Top Up Funding	Band Value 2025/26
Mainstream - Primary Band 1	£15,653	£6,000	£4,955	£5,167	£16,122
Mainstream - Primary Band 2	£20,588	£6,000	£4,955	£10,251	£21,206
Mainstream - Primary Band 3	£28,427	£6,000	£4,955	£18,325	£29,280
Mainstream - Primary Band 4	£30,750	£6,000	£4,955	£20,717	£31,672
Mainstream - Primary Band 5	£32,491	£6,000	£4,955	£22,511	£33,466
Mainstream - Primary Band 6	£34,233	£6,000	£4,955	£24,305	£35,260
Mainstream - Primary Band 7	£41,201	£6,000	£4,955	£31,482	£42,437
Mainstream - Primary Band 8	£45,846	£6,000	£4,955	£36,266	£47,221
Mainstream - Secondary Band 1	£15,550	£6,000	£6,465	£3,552	£16,017
Mainstream - Secondary Band 2	£20,545	£6,000	£6,465	£8,696	£21,161
Mainstream - Secondary Band 3	£28,324	£6,000	£6,465	£16,709	£29,174
Mainstream - Secondary Band 4	£30,647	£6,000	£6,465	£19,101	£31,566
Mainstream - Secondary Band 5	£32,389	£6,000	£6,465	£20,896	£33,361
Mainstream - Secondary Band 6	£34,131	£6,000	£6,465	£22,690	£35,155
Mainstream - Secondary Band 7	£41,099	£6,000	£6,465	£29,867	£42,332
Mainstream - Secondary Band 8	£45,744	£6,000	£6,465	£34,651	£47,116
Mainstream - Nursery	£37,160	£0	£0	£38,275	£38,275

4.13 Detail information will be presented at the meeting on the band value and academic year funding to be paid to each Resource Base provider.

4.14 For Special Schools a review of the band values to be applied has been undertaken with the aim of standardising the gap between each of the bands.

THURROCK BAND VALUES							
Increased in Band values to be applied from start of new Academic year							
Band Descriptor	Place Funding	TPG and TPEG	Top Up Funding	Band Value 2024/25	Place Funding	Top Up Funding	Band Value 2025/26
Special Band 0	£10,000	£660	£0	£10,660	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Special Band 1	£10,000	£660	£4,587	£15,247	£10,000	£5,158	£15,158
Special Band 2	£10,000	£660	£5,457	£16,117	£10,000	£11,658	£21,658
Special Band 3	£10,000	£660	£17,457	£28,117	£10,000	£18,158	£28,158
Special Band 4	£10,000	£660	£27,145	£37,805	£10,000	£24,658	£34,658
Special Band 5	£10,000	£660	£29,134	£39,794	£10,000	£31,158	£41,158
Special Band 6	£10,000	£660	£35,134	£45,794	£10,000	£37,658	£47,658
Special Band 7	£10,000	£660	£41,134	£51,794	£10,000	£44,158	£54,158
Special Band 8	£10,000	£660	£47,134	£57,794	£10,000	£50,658	£60,658
Special Band 9	£10,000	£660	£53,134	£63,794	£10,000	£57,158	£67,158
AP Band 1	£10,000	£660	£21,049	£31,709	£10,000	£21,980	£31,980

- 4.15 In addition, a change to the treatment of individual grants, now known as legacy grants, requires the LA to determine an individual per pupil value of each Special and AP academy and apply this in addition to the band values. The individual per pupil values to be applied are shown in the table below:

Legacy Grant	Amount 3.4%	TPG and TPEG	Legacy Funding
Treetops Free School	£730	£660	£1,390
Treetops School	£680	£660	£1,340
Beacon Hill Academy	£1,182	£660	£1,842
Olive AP Academy	£968	£660	£1,628

- 4.16 In 2025/26 Special and AP Academies will receive a Core Schools Budget Grant of £2,054 plus Area Cost Adjustment per pupil. It is expected that this will be merged into the legacy grant payment in 2026/27.
- 4.17 Detail information will be presented at the meeting on the band value and academic year funding to be paid to each Special and AP Academy.

Outreach Support

- 4.18 As part of the Delivering Better Value SEND programme a review of commissioned outreach support was undertaken to review existing provision with a view to prioritising resources to enable the new outreach support provided in 2024/25 through the DBV grant to continue in 2025/26.
- 4.19 The table below shows the outreach support to be commissioned for the academic year 2025/26:

Academic Year Impact - Increase applied from September each year			
	3%	Commissioned Services	
2024/25	2025/26	Academy	2025/26
£394,748	£406,590	Osborne Trust - HI/VI - Outreach *	£480,000
£292,005	£300,765	Treetops - Early Years SEND	£250,000
£348,243	£358,690	Treetops - Outreach Autism Primary	£250,000
		Treetops - Outreach Secondary	£0
£194,670	£200,510	Beacon Hill - Outreach	£100,000
£15,000	£15,000	PATT Contract	£15,000
£180,000	£185,400	SEND DBV Primary - Osborne	£185,400
£120,000	£123,600	SEND DBV Secondary - Olive	£123,600
£1,544,666	£1,590,555	Total Commissioned Services	£1,404,000

* Includes Invoices paid separately in 2024/25

Post 16

- 4.20 Increased number of EHCP students remaining in education that require additional support. This has been included in the updated position with a potential cost implication of £8.247m for the period 2024/25 to 2028/29.

Tuition

- 4.21 The total cost of all Tuition support provided is in excess of £2m in 2024/25. This is a separate agenda item where options need to be considered to reduce the demand and cost implication.

Out of Borough Placements

- 4.22 The updated position shows a reduction in numbers and costs.

High Needs Block Budget 2025/26

- 4.23 The requirement remains to set a balanced budget. Therefore, the gap in funding from that calculated to be required is shown as a Risk of £3.731m. In 2025/26 a table will be developed to enable monitoring against both the budget and the DSG management plan calculated figure.

Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs Block	2024/25 Outturn £m	2025/26 UPDATED DSG Mgmt Plan £m	2025/26 RISKS £m	2025/26 Budget £m
High Needs Block	38.888	41.870		41.870
Funding Block Transfer	0.400	0.000		0.000
Funding Settlement	39.288	41.870	0.000	41.870
Place Funding	0.000	0.508	(0.042)	0.466
Place Funding Academies to be recouped	7.250	7.246		7.246
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Schools & Academies	5.261	5.924	(0.539)	5.385
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Resource Provisions	4.573	4.699		4.699
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Special Schools	8.374	9.291	(0.207)	9.084
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Alternative Provision	1.895	1.870		1.870
Top Up Funding - Other Local Authorities (4-16)	1.623	1.477	(0.050)	1.427
Top Up Funding - Post 16	3.273	4.434	(1.200)	3.234
Pupils not in School	0.466	0.666		0.440
Additional High Needs Targeted	0.790	0.775	(0.804)	0.600
Medical Tuition	0.510	0.504		0.100
Year 11s	0.033	0.000		0.000
North View Independent SEMH	0.000	0.947	(0.143)	0.804
Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	1.854	1.411	(0.500)	0.911
Non Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	2.451	2.115		2.115
Commissioned Services	1.245	1.591	(0.187)	1.404
Home Hospital Education Services	0.000	0.030		0.030
Travellers Team	0.053	0.056		0.056
Home to School Transport	1.600	1.600		1.600
High Needs Central Team	0.500	0.458	(0.058)	0.400
Dedicated Schools Grant	41.751	45.601	(3.731)	41.870
(Surplus) / Deficit	2.463	3.731	(3.731)	(0.000)

DSG Management Plan 2025/26

- 4.24 The DSG Management plan has been updated to reflect current demand and costs within the system.

DSG Mgmt. Plan - Updated 2025/26	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Total Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mainstream	7.621	9.505	10.788	11.190	11.845	12.896
Resources	5.043	5.569	5.695	6.717	7.361	7.935
Special Schools	12.580	13.774	14.691	16.630	18.060	19.439
NMSS or Independent	3.960	4.305	4.472	5.232	5.389	5.266
Medical or Home Tuition	1.078	0.976	1.200	1.272	1.348	1.430
Post-16 or FE	2.563	3.273	4.434	4.629	4.833	5.048
AP	2.721	2.749	2.720	2.925	2.977	3.030
Other H2S Transport	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600
Total	37.165	41.751	45.600	50.195	53.414	56.643
DSG Assumed	38.111	39.288	41.870	43.126	44.420	45.753
In Year Position HNB	(0.946)	2.463	3.730	7.069	8.994	10.890
In Year Position Other Funding Blocks	(0.219)	(0.738)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
DSG Deficit/(Surplus)	0.534	(0.631)	1.094	4.825	11.893	20.887
Accumulated Deficit/(Surplus)	(0.631)	1.094	4.825	11.893	20.887	31.777

- 4.25 The updated plan shows a deficit position of £31.77m, this is an increase of £14.898m. The key variances are shown in the table below:

Change	Change	Narrative
Total Expenditure	£	
Mainstream	7.311	Increase in EHCP;s and complexity of need
Resources	(3.547)	Reprofiled of Resource base numbers
Special Schools	12.474	Increase in places and complexity of need
NMSS or Independent	(1.817)	Reduction in Unit cost (- 23%) & Placements (-9) (-54)
Medical or Home Tuition	2.179	Reflective of current demand, SF discussion
Post-16 or FE	8.247	Increase in Post 16 numbers
AP	(3.055)	Reflects Placements of 30 North View
Other H2S Transport	0.560	Reflect DSG contribution
Total	22.352	
DSG Assumed	6.562	2025/26 updated +3%
In Year Position HNB	15.790	
In Year Position Other Funding Blocks	(0.892)	
DSG Deficit/(Surplus)		
Accumulated Deficit/(Surplus)	14.898	

- 4.26 Further information will be included in the presentation to be made at the meeting.

Delivering Better Value SEND programme.

- 4.27 Thurrock as part of the Delivering Better Value SEND programme in 2023/24 received a grant from the Department for Education for additional funding of £1 million for 2024/25 to develop initiatives to support the reduction of EHCP and the upskilling of school-based staff. This was to support the long-term management of DSG. It is expected in the new year that the Government will outline its long-term plan for the management of SEND.

4.28 The current spend against the grant submitted as part of Q3 (December-2024) is shown in the table below. Allow the grant is for the financial year 2024/25, the DfE acknowledge that this was to be spent over the academic year 2024/25.

Workstream & Area	Impact	Total Expenditure to date	Q4 Budget	Expenditure and Q4 Budget
Workstream 1 - Improving mainstream capacity and ability to meet needs of children and young people at SEND Support and with EHCPs.	Primary - Training	£153,321	£158,679	£312,000
	Secondary - Training	£54,000	£102,000	£156,000
	Thurrock - Training	£21,246	£60,754	£82,000
Workstream 2a - Improving mainstream capacity and ability to meet needs of children and young people at SEND Support and with EHCPs.	Primary Outreach	£120,000	£60,000	£180,000
	Secondary Outreach	£80,000	£40,000	£120,000
Workstream 2b - Review of Outreach services to prioritise and mainstream year 1 investment	SEND specialist engaged to review and prioritise outreach offer.	£75,000	£0	£75,000
Workstream 3 - Reducing the high INMSS placement costs	Increase to commissioning capacity to ensure VFM being secured.	£75,000	£0	£75,000
Total		£578,567	£421,433	£1,000,000

SEND Local Offer and Strategic Planning Group

4.29 This is a subgroup of the schools forum that now needs to be formally constituted with an agreed work plan for reports to be developed and reported back into the schools forum.

4.30 At the meeting held on the 4 March 2025 the following key issues were discussed that could form part of the workplan for the year ahead.

- Inclusion in Mainstream
 - Sharing the experience and the benefits of Resources Bases?
 - Mainstream Inclusion - Mainstream Academies have many of the same needs as Specialist placements, how do we further support more mainstream inclusion, recognising the challenges that they face.
 - ECHP funding – Currently paid as an hourly rate. Do we need to review and consider the development of mainstream Band Values.
 - What are options to change the current landscape and support the management of the DSG? How will this link to expected announcements over the coming months.
 - Independent review has been commissioned to understand why Thurrock has 2% more EHCP's than other LA's.
 - How do we plan for the secondary increase in numbers

- How do we plan for the post 16 increase in numbers
- How do we plan for the increased need for tuition – and how can this be funded.

Early Years

4.31 In January the schools forum and Early year providers were notified of the proposed funding formula for 2025/26. Cabinet approved this formula at its meeting on the 12 February 2025.

Early Years Funding Formula 2025/26		
The hourly rates to be paid to all providers from April 2025 are:		
Under 2's	£11.50	An increase of 36p per hour
2 Year Olds	£8.30	An increase of 80p per hour. No deprivation funding to be paid.
3 and 4 Year Olds	£5.50	An increase of 10p per hour. Increase to deprivation rates.
Deprivation funding 3 & 4 Year Olds only	Annual Rate	Rate Per Hour
Band G - IDACI SCORE < 0.20	£0.00	£0.00
Band F - IDACI SCORE 0.20 - 0.25	£340.00	£0.60
Band E - IDACI SCORE 0.25 - 0.30	£340.00	£0.60
Band D - IDACI SCORE 0.30 - 0.35	£425.00	£0.75
Band C - IDACI SCORE 0.35 - 0.40	£540.00	£0.95
Band B - IDACI SCORE 0.40 - 0.50	£685.00	£1.20
Band A - IDACI SCORE > 0.50	£800.00	£1.40
IDACI Postcode Score can be download from:		
http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/imd/2019		
EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM	£570.00	£1.00
DISABILITY ACCESS FUND	£938.00	

5. REFERENCES TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS / PREVIOUS REPORTS

- Schools Forum Meeting 16-01-25 – Dedicated Schools Grant 2025/26
- Schools Forum Meeting 28-11-24 – Dedicated Schools Grant 2025/26

6. CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact.

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THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE: 13 March 2025
SUBJECT: Permanent Exclusions funding arrangements 2025/26
REPORT OF: Michele Lucas
THE REPORT IS: For Decision

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update relating to the contribution to the education of permanently excluded children which was agreed by Schools Forum in March 2021.
- 1.2 To update the financial contribution, we will seek from schools from September 2025 to support children and young people who have been permanently excluded.
- 1.3 To continue on the principal of funding following the child or young person.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Schools' Forum members are asked to approve the increase in the financial contribution from Schools from September 2025 as shown in Appendix A.

3. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 To seek agreement from Schools Forum to update the financial for pupils permanently excluded from mainstream schools and academies.

4. BACKGROUND –NUMBER OF PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Table 1 details the number of permanent exclusions by academic year since 2016/17.

Table 1 Number of Permanent Exclusions by Academic Year

Academic year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2016/17	4	19	23
2017/18	16	27	43
2018/19	9	35	44
2019/20	2	29	31
2020/21	1	25	26
2021/22	2	35	37
2022/23	2	23	25
2023/24	5	44	49
2024/25 to date	2	15	17

- 4.2 The lower level of permanent exclusions has offered some support to the High Needs Block, however the continued pressure on the high needs expenditure remains unsustainable.
- 4.3 The LA buys places for excluded pupils upfront from Alternative Providers or Specialist Resource bases to ensure that permanently excluded pupils have access to education (6-day provision). There is a finite amount of DSG budget that the LA can use to do this with and if the number of places is exceeded then additional budget will need to be found to spot purchase places. The contributions received from schools has supported with some of the DSG overspend in high needs funding.

5. MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS EXCLUSION CHARGES

- 5.1 The methodology for the calculation of exclusion charges for mainstream pupils is set out within the School Finance Regulations.
- 5.2 The purpose of the charge is to provide a contribution to the cost of alternative school provision as part of the arrangements for pupils educated out of school and if the pupil is admitted to another mainstream school within the funding period, the admitting school's will receive the budget share in accordance with the complete weeks remaining in the funding period during which the pupil is a pupil at the admitting school.
- 5.3 The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations states that, where a child is permanently excluded, the Local Authority must re-determine an excluding school's budget share.

6. CURRENT METHOD USED IN THURROCK

- 6.1 For excluded pupils, the charges will be as per the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations. This means that when a pupil is permanently excluded, the authority will re-determine the excluding school's budget share. The excluding school's budget share will be reduced by the per pupil rate at individual school level, as shown in Appendix A, and any pupil premium attributable to the child. This will be pro-rated based on the weeks remaining in the funding period.
- 6.2 The funding period is the academic year.
- 6.3 At the date of the permanent exclusion the financial information available will be used to determine the funding to be withdrawn or provided. No retrospective adjustment will be made.
- 6.4 The charge to be calculated will be the full funding period.
- 6.5 In a small number of cases, a school will agree to admit a pupil outside of the October census date, in these cases an individual discussion will be held on the funding to be withdrawn unique to the individual circumstances surrounding the child.

7. REFERENCES TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS / PREVIOUS REPORTS

- 7.1 School Forum Report 14-03-24 - Permanent Exclusions 2024/25

8. CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

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Thurrock School Funding Formula - Individual School Level Values

Appendix A

LAESTAB	Phase	School Name	Per Pupil Value 2024/25	Per Pupil Value 2025/26
8833822	Primary	Abbots Hall Primary School	£4,785.88	£5,151.33
8832439	Primary	Arthur Bugler Primary School	£4,622.02	£5,134.97
8832014	Primary	Aveley Primary School	£5,107.82	£5,554.54
8832542	Primary	Belmont Castle Academy	£4,806.93	£5,286.10
8832003	Primary	Benyon Primary School	£5,195.75	£5,615.32
8832722	Primary	Bonnygate Primary School	£5,087.64	£5,557.53
8832013	Primary	Bulphan Church of England Academy	£7,086.80	£8,062.14
8832011	Primary	Chadwell St Mary Primary School	£5,603.12	£6,155.93
8832462	Primary	Deneholm Primary School	£4,875.78	£5,304.73
8832622	Primary	Dilkes Academy	£5,008.15	£5,441.84
8832824	Primary	East Tilbury Primary School	£4,977.99	£5,396.83
8832942	Primary	Giffards Primary School	£4,852.71	£5,303.49
8832137	Primary	Graham James Primary Academy	£4,707.90	£5,146.34
8832987	Primary	Harris Primary Academy Chafford Hundred	£4,654.02	£4,999.09
8832008	Primary	Harris Primary Academy Mayflower	£4,625.93	£4,970.66
8832644	Primary	Herringham Primary Academy	£5,472.71	£6,018.61
8833605	Primary	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School	£5,343.70	£5,744.82
8835281	Primary	Horndon-On-the-Hill CofE Primary School	£4,899.66	£5,414.53
8835266	Primary	Kenningtons Primary Academy	£4,902.94	£5,346.73
8832000	Primary	Lansdowne Primary Academy	£5,652.04	£6,112.20
8832015	Primary	Little Thurrock Primary School	£4,630.03	£5,024.55
8832006	Primary	Mossbourne Herd Lane.	£4,707.02	£5,195.92
8833502	Primary	Orsett Church of England Primary School	£4,838.48	£5,251.25
8832002	Primary	Purfleet Primary Academy	£5,306.14	£5,806.23
8832005	Primary	Quarry Hill Academy	£5,029.41	£5,573.98
8832985	Primary	Shaw Primary Academy	£5,170.78	£5,649.58
8832429	Primary	Somers Heath Primary School	£5,017.39	£5,586.84
8833512	Primary	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	£5,188.70	£5,804.67
8833522	Primary	St Mary's Catholic Primary School	£5,547.04	£6,015.71
8833603	Primary	St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School	£4,774.57	£5,281.97
8832004	Primary	Stanford-Le-Hope Primary School	£4,869.89	£5,327.01
8832009	Primary	Stifford Clays Primary School	£4,809.94	£5,297.59
8832001	Primary	Thameside Primary School	£5,231.26	£5,660.10
8832024	Primary	The Gateway Primary Free School	£5,589.22	£6,119.18
8832007	Primary	Tilbury Pioneer Academy	£5,550.97	£6,098.87
8832984	Primary	Tudor Court Primary School	£4,638.13	£4,984.48
8832078	Primary	Warren Primary School	£4,636.58	£4,981.39
8832592	Primary	West Thurrock Academy	£4,955.89	£5,405.71
8832472	Primary	Woodside Academy	£4,738.79	£5,216.26

Thurrock School Funding Formula - Individual School Level Values

Appendix A

LAESTAB	Phase	School Name	Per Pupil Value 2024/25	Per Pupil Value 2025/26
8834733	Secondary	Grays Convent High School	£6,562.89	£7,216.04
8834394	Secondary	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	£6,172.95	£6,844.69
8834003	Secondary	Harris Academy Ockendon	£6,749.08	£7,421.25
8834002	Secondary	Harris Academy Riverside	£6,678.95	£7,378.62
8835439	Secondary	Mossbourne Fobbing	£6,508.00	£7,144.30
8834001	Secondary	Mossbourne Port Side	£7,115.05	£7,915.76
8836906	Secondary	Ormiston Park Academy	£7,114.59	£7,828.08
8834004	Secondary	Orsett Heath Academy	£6,438.13	£7,245.75
8835440	Secondary	St Clere's School	£6,626.20	£7,253.47
8834005	Secondary	Thames Park Secondary School	£6,728.49	£7,480.67
8836905	Secondary	The Gateway Academy	£7,446.20	£8,137.85
8834000	Secondary	The Hathaway Academy	£7,072.07	£7,764.66
8835438	Secondary	William Edwards School	£6,411.08	£7,111.25

THURROCK SCHOOLS FORUM REPORT

DATE:	March 2024
SUBJECT:	Union Facility Time
REPORT OF:	Sue Lamkin
THE REPORT IS:	For Decision

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an annual update to the Forum on Union Facility Time including the balance and details of school claims. The Unions have requested a review of the Union Facility Time and the contributions of schools to be increased. The Forum is also requested to review the administration of this service so that a decision could be made by members on whether they wished Thurrock Council to continue with the administration.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Forum decides on how it wishes to proceed with the scheme.
That the Forum decides on the contribution rate for schools for the financial year 2025/2026
That the Forum decides on whether it wishes for Thurrock Council to continue to administer the fund.

3.0 Introduction

Thurrock Council administers the Union Facility Time budget on behalf of all schools in Thurrock. The administration duties cover:

- design and management of claim forms along with guidance notes,
- managing and monitoring of the budget,
- reviewing claims for legitimacy,
- recording and raising debtors requests to charge all schools that have signed up to facility time,
- recording and raising creditor payments for claims received,
- reviewing and monitoring any changes to ACAS code of practice in relation to facility time
- updating documentation if and when required
- providing a reconciliation of the account to the Forum on an annual basis.

We propose that the Council annual service charge for 2025/2026 remains at £500.

4.0 Union Facility Time Cost to Schools

A charge of 10p per pupil was agreed for the 2018/2019 academic year. There is a complete buy in from all schools within the borough.

It was agreed by Schools Forum no charge would be made to schools for the year 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, 2022/2023, 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 as the balance was sufficient to cover claims. The balance at the end of the financial year if no claims are received is expected to be £12666.58

During the year 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 no claims have been received to date. The administration fee of £500.00 has been claimed by Thurrock Council.

Based on the current surplus, to increase the balance available, the Forum may wish to consider the attached joint unions report requesting future contribution to the fund of **£1.00** per pupil per school.

FINANCIAL / RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

This scheme is self-financing from the schools income and is reliant on all schools buying back into the scheme and the amount of contribution set for the following academic year.

5.0 CONTACT DETAILS OF LEAD OFFICER / AUTHOR

If you have any queries or comments in advance of the Schools Forum meeting about this report, please contact

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TU Facility Time
FAQs.pdf

Facility Time: 10 Reasons to Buy In

Where local authorities have established some central arrangement to which schools with delegated funding can contribute, it is important that all schools participate, and our experience is that they do. Not only does this represent a collegiate approach, but it also ensures equity of support and service.

This is achieved through:

- 1. Economy of scale.** It is more cost effective for the release time of trained Union officers to be shared centrally ensuring no individual school is disproportionately affected
- 2. Right to release.** Representatives of recognised trade unions are entitled to paid time off to carry out aspects of their role in representing members – contributing to the pool fulfils this duty
- 3. Simplicity.** Other arrangements are difficult to administer, burdensome and ultimately more expensive and are not therefore in the interests of our schools or children
- 4. Efficiency.** With adequate pooled resources issues can be dealt with in a timely manner, and with the involvement of the most experienced and appropriate local officer
- 5. Consultation.** Where new policies or conditions of service are implemented, through consultation, pooled time off ensures that such documents have received an appropriate level of scrutiny
- 6. Confidence.** The ability to implement properly scrutinised documents ensures a level of confidence that the policies are robust and fair, and suitable should any issue later arise
- 7. Shared risk.** By pooling resources, no single school should suffer adversely by carrying costs arising from the unexpected
- 8. Training.** Your trade union representatives accrue considerable expertise and training, and this can be a timely and costly process – by pooling our resources we can all benefit from this level of expertise
- 9. Specialisms.** Many Union officers have areas of specialist knowledge, essential in supporting schools and members in addressing issues of concern – these skills can also be shared through the use of pooled resources
- 10. Harmony.** Pooled resources provide the greatest opportunity to maintain and strengthen the positive, constructive and supportive relationship that exists between staff and their employers.

FAQs - Facilities Time Arrangements

1. Why should I buy back facilities time?

Under current legislation, workplace representatives are entitled to paid time off in order to undertake trade union duties and training. Facilities time arrangements are set up so that individual schools do not carry the burden of releasing several workplace representatives from each of the education unions. Instead, each school contributes a small proportion of the cost to release a Union Secretary for each union. By paying into local Facilities Time arrangements, local Union Secretaries will be the first point of representation for your school. This means that your school will be serviced by representatives who are readily available and have specialist local knowledge.

2. What happens if I do not buy back?

Issues must either be dealt with by Trade Union staff. Staff cover a much wider geographical area and are often unavailable to attend short notice meetings. Planning any meeting will be much more difficult because of this. Alternatively representation will fall to workplace representatives who will need to be trained to undertake their role so that they are able to deal with cases, and released from their day to day duties.

There is also a legal requirement for employers to report on facility time. If schools do not contribute to the pool, then each school would have to individually report under the Public Sector Facility Time Publications Requirement.

3. What are the advantages of buying back the service locally?

Current funding arrangements ensure that the above activities are retained locally. It cannot be understated the significant advantage of dealing with locally based representatives who know the schools, their communities and contexts, know headteachers and other school leaders by name and build relationships that encourage cooperative solutions to local issues. This is in stark contrast to the alternative where regional or national union officials are brought in, knowing little if anything of the local context described above.

4. But does 'local' actually make a difference?

Yes, definitely. Locally based union representatives help to resolve issues at an early stage. If less facilities time was provided, fewer issues would be resolved informally, resulting in a significant increase in costs to schools and workload for school leaders. Disciplinary, grievance and capability issues would be more likely to escalate, with cases more likely to reach employment tribunals. Involving trade union representatives effectively can help reduce dismissal and exit rates, meaning lower recruitment costs and better staff morale and productivity. It also reduces workplace related injuries and illnesses through better health and safety standards.

5. But I have never needed the unions to come in – we have no problems at school.

One of the main reasons why you will have had few problems noticed is because of the work done 'behind the scenes' by local union officers. This is directly connected to the above. Members contact local officers all the time for advice, to talk over issues, to discuss ways forward, approaches to problems they may have at school and positive responses to help them avoid matters escalating.

6. I /my school has had a challenging relationship with a particular Trade Union/ Official recently. Why should we buy back when we do not always agree with the work of the Trade Union(s)?

It's important to recognise that, whilst Trade Unions do strive to have good working relationships with employers – and these good local relationships have typically been the case in - we will not always agree on matters and that does not mean that progress can't be made on an issue, of course. However, whether your school buys back or not does not prevent your employees from joining a Trade Union. Our members have a statutory right to representation and regardless of buy back our members will be represented. The only difference will be with regards to the person who will represent them or the arrangements for that representation. As such, choosing not to buy back will not prevent our work at your school.

7. We don't feel comfortable paying into facilities time arrangements as this enables someone to be paid full time when they should be teaching

Union Secretaries are teachers and are not given permanent full time release. They are released from duties for a proportion of the teaching week. When considering workplace representatives could be elected, trained and released for duties in every school by each of the education Trade Unions it is easy to see the cost effectiveness of the arrangements. Union Secretaries are dedicated to their work in schools and often work more than the time they are awarded – regularly attending meetings late after school at the request of head teachers in order to minimize the need for cover and working during the holidays.

8. We shouldn't pay as this is what Trade Union subscriptions are for.

As stated above, facilities time is not an “extra” service. Members are still entitled in law to trade union representation, whether or not your school buys back. It will, as stated above, have to be done in a different way where Individual schools will fund the cost of any individual workplace representative's release. Regardless of where the funding is held, union representatives are entitled to reasonable paid time off to carry out trade union duties, and to attend training relevant to their role.

Without centralised facilities time, union representatives rely on the statutory right to time off for such activities as provided in law. This requires representatives in schools to be provided with time off often at short notice with the cost falling upon individual schools and academies. Both the cost and the disruption to pupils' education is very much likely to be greater than is currently the case under the existing facilities agreement, where dedicated time is provided. It guarantees all staff (including the Head teacher) have access to independent advice and support in the same way management can access advice and support from HR. This is crucial to maintain good staff relations and help resolve issues at the lowest possible level, avoiding escalation.

Costs for a discrimination case

Discrimination claims can include not only race discrimination but also discrimination on the grounds of faith or belief which can be quite wide ranging. Discrimination legislation allows claims for alleged discrimination on grounds of sex, race, disability, sexuality, faith or belief and age, all of which may also be pursued as separately identified cases against a school. Employees can also pursue claims for victimisation where they have made a complaint of discrimination (whether internally or externally) and feel they received treatment that victimised them in response to that complaint. Other key pieces of legislation that teachers have been known to pursue claims under include the Fixed Term Employee Regulations, the Part Time Worker Regulations, the Agency Worker Regulations, Unfair Dismissal and Unfair Selection for Redundancy. These are the commonest claims the trade unions generally handle for teachers, although there are other heads of law that could be relied upon.

This case study demonstrates the costs associated with a case where a teacher believed that he was being discriminated against on grounds of race and disability. This teacher raised the issue of race discrimination with the school but was not satisfied with the way in which his complaint was handled or resolved. This led to extreme stress and anxiety which after a period of time manifested itself in physical illness diagnosed as severe and chronic irritable bowel syndrome and severe migraines. This teacher was then off sick for a considerable length of time resulting in the school commencing procedures to dismiss the teacher on grounds of ill health. This teacher was convinced that his illness was caused by the racial discrimination he experienced in his workplace and intended to take a claim for unfair dismissal and discrimination on the grounds of race and disability to employment tribunal. There was medical evidence to support this view for legal purposes.

The case was eventually settled by way of a settlement agreement after more than 18 months of meetings and negotiation.

The potential costs of this case had it not been resolved by the intervention and support of the trade union concerned have been assessed as follows:

Had the member not had union representation, he would undoubtedly have taken the case to tribunal. The union would have covered the member's legal costs but the school would have had to prepare and defend themselves in an employment tribunal which would have been listed as a 5 day hearing. The legal costs for the school would have been solicitor's fees of approximately £20,000 plus VAT.

Since the case involved two strands of discrimination, the school would have considered using a barrister. Barristers' fees are at least £1,500 per day (and may be much more) so including preparation time this could easily have been in the region of a further £10,000 plus VAT.

Thurrock School Forum Forward Plan for 2024 – 2025		
Date of meeting	Agenda Item	Report Author
12 th June 2025	Pupil Place Planning Review	Sarah Williams
	DSG Final Outturn Position 2024/25	David May
	Review of Forward Plan 2025/26	Sarah Williams
	Meeting dates for the academic year 2025/26	Sarah Williams
	Childcare Sufficiency	Andrea Winstone

**THURROCK SCHOOLS' FORUM
Draft Minutes**

**16th January 2025 at 10:00 - 12:00
Virtual Meeting - Microsoft Teams**

Multi Academy Trusts Name

The Gateway Learning Community Trust (GLC)
South West Essex Community Education Trust
Catalyst Academies Trust
Christus Catholic Trust

Mrs V Reid (Chair)
Mr S Munday
Mr T Parfett
Mrs J Seymour

Secondary Voluntary Aided School Name
Grays Convent
Diocese of Brentwood

Mrs P Johnson
Ms Grace Corry

Standalone Academy Trusts Name

West Thurrock Academy
Giffards Primary

Mr S Proctor
Mrs N Haslam-Davis

Infrastructure Groups Name

TASS
TPHA

Mr S Bell
Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes

Special Schools Name

Beacon Hill Academy
Treetops School

Mrs S Hewitt
Mr J Brewer

Non-school members Name

0-5 EYFS Representative
11-19 Representative
0-11 Representative

Mr A Melbourne
Mr S Bowak
Ms A Jones

Also in Attendance:

Head of Strategic Finance
Head of Service - Education Support Service
Head of Service – School Effectiveness and SEND
Head of Service - Specialist Provision & PEP
Clerk

Mr D May
Ms S Williams
Mrs A Winstone
Mr M W Taylor
Mrs K Swan

Purfleet Primary - Mr E Samuel
Osbourne Academy Trust - Mr P Griffiths
Olive Academy - Mr M Vickers
Mossbourne Federation - Ms C Lane-Craig

Apologies:

Mrs M Lucas
Mr S Bowak
Mr A Melbourne

1. Welcome from Chair

The Chair opened the meeting

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from:

Mrs M Lucas
Mr S Bowak
Mr A Melbourne

3. Introductions

The chair welcomed Claire Lane-Craig as a new member who has joined from The Mossbourne Federation.

4. Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/24 and 2025/26.

Mr D May apologised for the lateness of the presentation, this was due to information not being received from DFE until 19th December 2024.

Mr D May shared the presentation.

In the current year, the current projection is around £1.5 million overspend, with the carry forward that should reduce to around £0.800m. There is contingency for external placements that may take place this term. The Early Years block remains the most risk, the £0.149m underspend is because of additional grants received to support the Early Years Team. There is nothing yet for the Autumn Term so we will not know how the funding changes until end of March and the January census we will not find out until July.

For the funding settlement, £24 million additional funding was received, this is broken down into three parts. There is a 7% increase on the High Needs Block, and the Early Years Block nearly £8 million which reflects the full 30 hours increase from September 2025. Through the school funding settlements for 2024/25 the funding DSG was £167.156m, there are three grants that have been merged into the DSG, the total £9.8m. The Core Schools Budget grant that runs from April to August is an additional £2.4m which has been wrapped up into the DSG, therefore the increase in funding is only £1.56m.

For the growth fund, the funding allocation on the table shows a £1.4 million allocation, there is a separate item on the agenda for the Growth and Falling Rolls Fund.

The Cabinet have to agree the Local Authority funding formula, they will agree formally on 22nd January 2025 that they will continue the principles we have had since 2021. Thurrock does not receive a London Fringe Payment, it receives, in full the Area Cost Adjustment which all schools receive, not just those on a London border. Thurrock is better off because of the Cost Adjustment because it is the same as London Fringe.

When the formula is developed or used from the information that is provided by the DFE there is flexibility to determine what the factor values are. We tend to use the National Funding Formula, that is supplied by the Government along with the Area Cost Adjustment, in previous years we have not been able to afford it in full so have reduced the Primary Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. For this year because there is no transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block and because of the small amount that has been put in from then Growth Fund we are able to deliver and pay the full National Funding Formula Value with the Area Cost Adjustment in full. This is the maximum money that schools will receive as part of the National Funding Formula and are able to receive within the funding that is available. There are no changes to the percentages used for the Notional SEN Value.

The School Budget Information 2025/26 slides list the provisional funding allocation is for schools 2025/26. By 22nd January 2025 Mr D May will submit the tool to the EFSA for their validation to say it is fully complaint. Mr D May has focused on the first percentage change, those are the

change in pupil numbers that is reflected in the October 2024 census, schools should be aware of those reduction numbers and therefore have a full academic year before the budgets are applied to academies from September 2026. The last percentage increase is a change in the formula, the grants that have rolled in to the DSG are excluded.

The pupil premium will continue based on the October census, there is no values release as yet. There is no detail as yet on the National Insurance increase, there is a commitment that schools will receive a reimbursement for the net cost of the National Insurance increase.

There is no significant change from previous years in the Central School Services Block. The High Needs Block is a minimum increase of 7%, we have 7.13% however the 6% increase is because of the funding not transferring from the Schools Block this year. It was agreed at the last Schools Forum on 28th November 2024 that the High Needs Block will be considered in more detail during the next School Forum in March 2025, this will include a review of Special School bands, the outreach services, the DGS management plan will be updates and then a budget will be presented that will include some embedded risks. Looking at the funding and considering the current outturn position, it is thought there is already a £2.767 million risk built in to the budget.

The Early Years funding is the most complex of all of the funding blocks, this is because there are different rules for each of the different funding streams and there are also different census statuses for both summer and autumn terms as the funding is rolled out. The Local Authority receives an allocation based on a fixed hourly rate, it then must look at what can be passported to providers but it needs to retain for some other elements the Local Authority needs to fund. There are minimal changes to the formula this year apart from within the 2-year-olds. In the 2 years olds that was introduced in April 2024 there was an hourly rate plus deprivation, but when looking at the 2-year-old that has been paid out in the two terms of this financial year there is only around £100,000 that has been paid out for deprivation. What is being proposed is putting it all as an hourly rate which maximises the amount that all providers receive and then the deprivation element will be covered by the pupil premium.

The complexity of the £30 million funding allocation that Local Authority receive is the units that the DFE have used to fund it, is based on the January 2023 census. This will be automatically updated in July for the January 2024 census and then will get updated for the other census through the year. A funding formula needs to be developed that is flexible enough so that it can adjust as the units change so there is enough money to fund everything that is needed. The proposal that will be discussed at Provider Forum are the Under 2 will increase by 36p per hour to £11.50, the 2 Year Olds will increase by 80p per hour to £8.30 and the 3and 4 Year Olds will increase by 10p per hour to £5.50, more money has been put through the deprivation rate for 3- and 4-Year Olds, that is a compulsory factor that must be used as part of the 3- and 4-Year-Old funding formula. Pupil Premium has had a significant increase, from 67p per hour to £1. Each of the funding blocks need to be treated in isolation ensuring that they are affordable and also look at all the controls around the central team. The maximum the Local Authority is allowed to retain for the central team is 4%, traditionally Thurrock has been around 3% and looking to maintain. The risk is around £42,000 and this is what is being paid out. A £42,000 risk on a £30.1 million budget is deemed as ok. To demonstrate to providers how the rates have been passported over the middle spreadsheet and the two variance columns shows that for 3- and 4-Year Olds the full amount has not been passported over, 15p has been retained but increased the deprivation rate so there is a 7p difference in what has been received and what has been passported over. However, the opposite applies for the 2 Year Olds where the 50p significant increase and the Under 2 is 1p. One of the significant reasons for the hourly rate not being passported is the level of inclusion money that is being paid out to Early Years providers and ensuring there are significant funds to be able to afford that.

There are currently 13, 13 and 12 Early Years funded weeks, there were queries previously from providers regarding the autumn terms as to why this was not 14, this was reviewed and also looked at how the DFE will fund because a lot of the funding will now come through based on weeks in each term, therefore settings will be funded in the same way funding is received so will be on a 13, 14, 11 for 2025/26. All of the information on the Early Years will be presented to EY Provider Forum on 5th February 2025.

Questions:

Ms J Sawtell-Haynes asked Mr D May to clarify the Early Years, how much is being passed on and how much is being kept back.

Mr D May said that the hourly rate for 3- and 4-Year Olds is being increased by 10p per hour, virtually double the amount that is going through deprivation. When looking into the passport amount, only retaining 2.43% for 3- and 4-Year Olds. Each funding block needs to be viewed in isolation and ensured that it is compliance with the rules that apply. There is only a certain amount of money for each of the funding blocks. With the 2 Year Olds the new formula that has been introduced from April 2025, there were options put forward where there would be an hourly rate or an hourly rate plus deprivation, it was to try and differentiate between the disadvantaged 2's and the working 2's. However, when looking at how much went out just for 2 Year Olds on deprivation it was only around 25,000 so it is better to put the hourly rate up for everybody given the significant increase that has gone in to the pupil premium amount which is up to £1 per hour.

Ms J Sawtell-Haynes asked if the 10p per hour is what has been given or if it is a decision.

Mr D May said that it is a decision to make the funding affordable, Thurrock has been provided with £6.13 per hour for 3- and 4-Year Olds which is an increase of 25p and then paying £5.50 plus the deprivation amount so it is £7 per hour less than what is being passported over from for 3- and 4-Year Olds but also had to increase the value of SEN inclusion because of the demand.

Mr P Griffiths asked why such a small amount of money was there claimed for deprivation around 2 Year Olds, it does seem strange that there are different features for different age ranges and is interested to know why.

Mr D May said that before the changes came last year it was all about disadvantaged 2 Year Olds so therefore it was just an hourly rate, no money needed to be put through deprivation because everybody was disadvantaged. Using the 3- and 4-Year-Old data and looking at the postcodes of everybody that would be eligible, you get funded by the same one hourly rate for both the same offer, but we have flexibility to change that hourly rate to have a differential between disadvantaged and working parents. It makes sense that you would put more money through disadvantaged, but you cannot because you have got to balance each funding block in turn and therefore you are getting the same hourly rate. When looking at the two-census data's that have come through in the summer and the autumn term, the postcode of the child determines the deprivation factor they would receive and for some reason that is less than what was expected to pay out and so there were guesstimates based on the 3- and 4-Year Olds and given the low amount it was felt easier to put it all through the hourly rate and then it also provides more certainty for all providers to know the amount of children multiplies by the hourly rate equals the funding.

Mr P Griffiths asked how the providers are responding to the changes, having a difference between the age ranges which is rather complicated and out of alignment from how things have been done in the past.

Mr D May said that this is what would be discussed at the Providers Forum in February 2025, Cabinet will consider before they formally approve but the rates have got to be published by DFE guidelines by 20th February 2025.

Ms A Jones said that the difference with the 2 Year Olds is that most are working parents, there are few that come through on deprivation side so can see why it has ended up with so little because of the nature of the parents that are accessing it. Also, to know what you are getting is much better than guessing what children are going to get until the end of the term, you know at the start what you are getting, it seems a simple way of working.

Mr P Griffiths added that as a Forum it needs to be considered that children from deprived homes are not accessing this sort of provision.

Mr D May said that it is a big change in that the 2-Year-Old offer, the 2-Year-Old disadvantaged receive 15 hours, the 2-Year-Old working parents are now entitled to 30 hours from September.

Mrs V Reid added that this would be reviewed on an annual basis.

Mrs S Hewitt asked Mr D May when the High Needs Block is brought back in March, could there be a clear breakdown and an understanding of how the additional grants work for Special Schools.

Mr D May has agreed.

Action: Mr D May to include a breakdown of how the additional grants work for Special Schools when the High Needs Block is presented at the next Schools Forum in March 2025.

Mrs J Sawtell-Haynes asked Mr D May if there is any money left over in the growth fund does that get used to pay of the deficit.

Mr D May confirmed that it does, if there is any money left over in any of the funding blocks it goes towards the DSG reserve that will be in deficit.

Mr P Griffiths said that it has taken many years to get to in terms of shaping the situation in Thurrock to be at the National Funding Formula, it is still not being enforced Nationally but we are still in line with the expectations which is a positive move for this Local Authority. Mr P Griffiths said that one of the issues is there is potential increase in primary and secondary hence there is a growth fund, is there enough places in Thurrock to fulfil that, as there have been concerns about this. There are still strong concerns about the inclusion of all children who live in Thurrock, who want to take a place in a Thurrock school. Are there any schools or trusts that are seeking to reduce their number that would make this matter worse.

Miss S Williams said that currently we are not aware of any consultations for schools that are looking to further reduce their PAN's. There have been a number of schools that have reduced in previous years which has given issues with capacity in year. As much growth has been retained as possible, there will always be the Year 11 issue, and there are issues with places in Year 8 and Year 9, there have been conversations with schools, it has been difficult to open additional bulge classes a full capacity but continue to have discussions with all schools. We have looked recently into fair distribution of pupils through Inclusion Panel. If schools are now able to open a bulge where they were not before there is some growth retained to be able to do that.

Mr M Taylor said that 15 pupils were fairly distributed through the fair access inclusion panel. The message that needs to go back from Schools Forum is that there needs to be a representation from all schools and a willingness if we are not going to be able to expand in year 8 and year 9 numbers, . This time has been successful but in the past, it has been difficult to get agreement over the Year 9 which leaves the admissions with a difficult situation in terms of finding places for those pupils, they only come to fair access if they go over 20 days and a school place cannot be offered.

Mr S Proctor put forward if there could be a group to put forward ideas and suggestions prior to the next School Forum when there would be a wider discussion around the High Needs Block. Decisions are being pushed to later in the year so it would be important to submit views and opinions moving forward.

Mr D May said that there is a Schools Forum Subgroup to look at the High Needs Block, this is next scheduled for February 2025. Any ideas can be put forward to Mr D May, Miss S Williams or a representative and alternatively can look at being part of the group.

Decisions:

Decision required: To confirm agreement to the retention of £1,106,741 to fund year growth in 2025/26. (minor change to the value included in the original report circulated)

Agreement - 15

Abstain - 1

Against - 0

AGREED.

Decision required: To agree the use of the Central Schools Services Block budget of £1.598m in 2026/25

Agreement - 16
Abstain - 0
Against - 0

AGREED.

Decision required: To agree the use of the Early Years Central Team budget of £0.805m in 2025/26

Agreement - 16
Abstain - 0
Against - 0

AGREED.

5. Growth and Falling Rolls Fund 2024/25.

Miss S Williams and Mr D May meet monthly to look at what places are available across all of the schools in Thurrock, working with the schools to open Bulge Classes where possible. Conversations will continue and as part of that transport is also looked at, there are considerations around eligibility for transport and distance of schools if looking to open Bulge Classes. When looking at the growth criteria, The New Schools Operations Guide 2025/26 which was published outlines all the principles for the Growth Fund, there are things that it can't be used for such as to support academies that are in financial difficulty. However, it can be used where it has been agreed with schools or academies to provide additional places that allows us to meet our basic need by either opening Bulge Classes or expansions where required. It can also be used to fund for a year and then there is an annual review of the Bulge Class and then the second year of funding is based on the difference between the actual number of children on roll at the October census. After the first two years there is no growth funding available.

SCAP data is also looked at which takes place annually, looking at the pupil numbers. In previous years there have not been many housing developments coming through the system although there has been a slight change, the most recent larger development has been Mulberry land in Tilbury, which has approved planning permission. There is also another development in West Horndon that is at consultation stage. Miss S Williams said that she is planning to bring more data to the School's Forum in June to show what is coming through the system, this will help schools to look at their current capacity and their pupil admission numbers to look to see if there is an option to expand their pupil admission numbers at the schools.

The AWPU paid for a primary pupil is £3,995 and for a secondary pupil £5,630, all the rates have been updated using the funding formula. The academic year growth for a full Bulge Class of 30, a primary school would receive £119,850 and for a secondary school £168,900.

The retained growth and the number of places were discussed in Mr D May's report, we are looking at retaining, looking at the need for an additional 270 places during this academic year and the 1.1 growth has already been agreed by members.

For the first time the funding formula included a provision for the Funding Rolls Policy. Local Authorities have the discretionary power as to whether they operate that fund and school capacity data is looked at for the subsequent 3 to 5 years. Because there are no housing developments, apart from Mulberry Land, we are not seeing those coming forward for the next to 3 to 5 years, we wouldn't then have a Falling Rolls Policy in place however that is look at every year.

Questions:

Mr P Griffiths asked if there has been any change to the criteria, there was a strong debate around only good schools could benefit, does that still apply?

Miss Williams said that the requirement that schools need to have an Ofsted rating of good or outstanding to be eligible for the Falling Rolls Fund no longer applies.

Mr Griffiths asked that in the sub-committee arrangements that sometimes applies through the Schools Forum, have you considered the notion of having a group to look at the idea of Bulge Classes. It is something that can be a benefit and works effectively if in the Year 3 of the bulge class the children continue to attend, in the sense that there is an ongoing number of children who need to attend in the year to follow, if it becomes a Bulge Class in a primary school for the duration of the child's experience at school and do not meet the full 30 capacity by the end of Year 2 you run a loss in the following years. The numbers are not always easy to predict. A personal view is that some schools are reluctant to take on Bulge classes because of the financial risks.

Miss S Williams agreed that it is a risk because there is no guarantee that the Bulge Class will fill by the end of the second year. There is only so much growth funding to be able to afford all the additional classes needed.

Mr D May added the funding policy that is implemented is following the DFE guidelines and therefore not permitted to do anything following year 3.

Miss S Williams agreed to reinstate the subgroup meetings to include all secondary schools to look at forecasting data 5 years ahead and bring back to the June meeting.

Ms J Sawtell-Haynes asked where new schools funding would come from.

Mr D May said that there are not any new schools currently but if there were they would be funded through DSG because pupil numbers would be adjusted.

Ms J Sawtell-Haynes added that the new school in Aveley that did not go ahead, if that did not only would there have been a loss of money, other schools would have lost children which would have been a huge impact on the surrounding schools.

Miss S Williams added that other Free School Delivery programme delivered by the DFE and all authorities nationally are waiting to hear about the Free School Delivery Programme for those schools that were in the pipeline as to whether they will go ahead.

Mr T Parfett added that at the time in the Bonnygate and Benyon area, Benyon is now a 2-form entry so that need has now been met. Because there are significant delays that is why Benyon was expanded, the school in Aveley is no longer needed.

Decisions:

Decision required: To agree the proposed criteria for schools and academies accessing funding allocated for growth for the academic year 2025/26

Agreement - 16

Abstain - 0

Against - 0

AGREED.

Decision required: To agree to the continued use of the age weighted pupil unit value for the academic year 2025/26

Agreement - 16

Abstain - 0

Against - 0

AGREED.

6. Review of Forward Plan 2025/26

Miss S Williams shared Forward Plan for 2024-2025.

Amendments to be made:

- March meeting reports to be added to the Forward plan as this had been deleted in error prior to circulation
- Medical tuition will be covered in the High Needs Block in March
- Review of Pupil Placed Planning to be covered in June meeting.
- DBV grant update

All in agreement.

7. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th November 2024

Reviewed and agreed as an accurate record with the exception of one amendment, name change from Mr R Latham to Mr T Parfett.

8. Action Log Review

All actions from previous meeting completed.

9. Any Other Business

Mr M Taylor shared this is the last meeting before February 15th, 2025, which is a significant date for High Needs Budget because of the need to complete the consultation for Year 6 and 7 transfers. As part of those transfer, parents make a preference for a particular school in term of the secondary transfer, we are obliged to follow the SEN code of practice processes however there are some discussions around parents making choices based on their on perceptions around the effectiveness of secondary schools to meet those needs and part of that is reputation. Secondary schools should consider how they are promoting and supporting the inclusion, ensuring parents receive a positive view on how they can be supported. If there is a significant disparity across secondary schools in terms of placements, following the consultations there will have to be adjustments made not only to the plan funding that comes to those children but the overall impact in terms of funding.

Mr S Proctor asked Ms A Winstone how many schools are actively engaged in training and completing the returns on the DBV.

Ms A Winstone said there are 46 schools have put in their grant request forms and their grant monitoring forms for December out of 53. It is being proposed that any unclaimed funding will be used to support the early Years sector as they have not had anything from DBV grant.

Date of next meeting

13th March 2025

Thurrock Borough Council
 Schools Forum - Action Log - Agenda Item: 12

School Forum Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action details	Action Owner	Action or Decision	Due date	Action Status	Additional information
16th January 2025	Item 4 - Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/24 and 2025/26	Mr D May to include a breakdown of how the additional grants work for Special Schools when the High Needs Block is presented at the next Schools Forum in March 2025.	DM	Action	13th March 2025	Open	
16th January 2025	Item 6 - Forward Plan	Medical tuition to be included in the High Needs Block for 13th March 2025	SW	Action	13th March 2025	Open	
16th January 2025	Item 6 - Forward Plan	Review of Pupil Placed Planning to be added to forward plan for 12th June 2025	SW	Action	12th June 2025	Complete	
16th January 2025	Item 6 - Forward Plan	DBV grant update to be added to the forward plan	SW	Action	13th March 2025	Complete	

Dedicated Schools Grant 2025/26

David May
Head of Strategic Finance
dmay@thurrock.gov.uk
13 March 2025

DSG Management Plan 2025/26

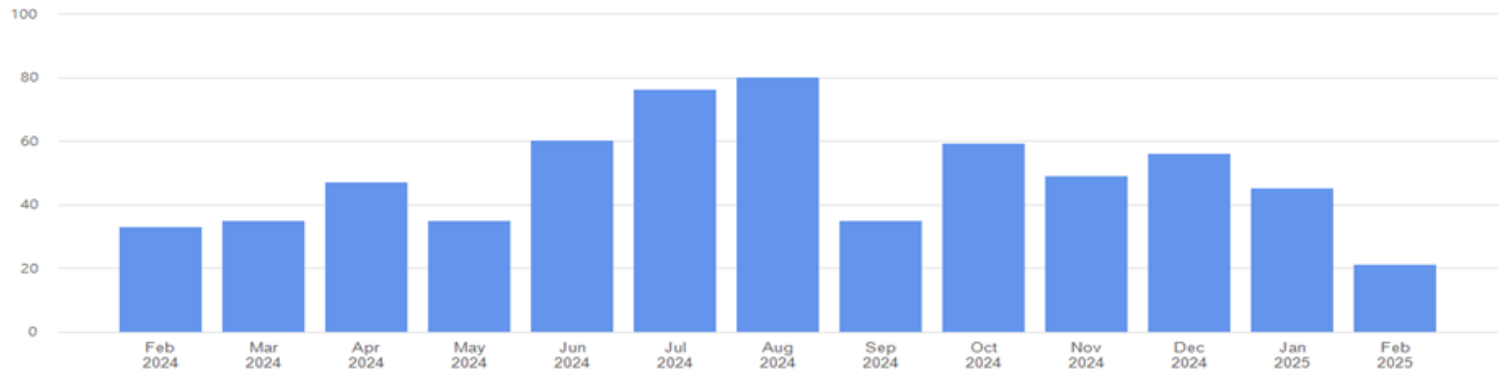
Updated 2025/26	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Total Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mainstream	7.621	9.505	10.788	11.190	11.845	12.896
Resources	5.043	5.569	5.695	6.717	7.361	7.935
Special Schools	12.580	13.774	14.691	16.630	18.060	19.439
NMSS or Independent	3.960	4.305	4.472	5.232	5.389	5.266
Medical or Home Tuition	1.078	0.976	1.200	1.272	1.348	1.430
Post-16 or FE	2.563	3.273	4.434	4.629	4.833	5.048
AP	2.721	2.749	2.720	2.925	2.977	3.030
Other H2S Transport	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600
Total	37.165	41.751	45.600	50.195	53.414	56.643
DSG Assumed	38.111	39.288	41.870	43.126	44.420	45.753
In Year Position HNB	(0.946)	2.463	3.730	7.069	8.994	10.890
In Year Position Other Funding Blocks	(0.219)	(0.738)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
DSG Deficit/(Surplus)	0.534	(0.631)	1.094	4.825	11.893	20.887
Accumulated Deficit/(Surplus)	(0.631)	1.094	4.825	11.893	20.887	31.777

Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 Period 9 (Dec24)

DSG 2024/25	Funding Settlement	Academy Recoupment	Funding Block Transfer	Final DSG	Projected Outturn	Variance		
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m		
Schools	167.156	(161.025)	(0.400)	5.731	5.148	(0.583)		
Central Services	1.633	0.000	0.000	1.633	1.627	(0.006)		
High Needs	38.888	(7.250)	0.400	32.038	34.500	2.463		
Early Years	22.468	0.000	0.000	22.468	22.319	(0.148)		
Total	230.145	(168.275)	0.000	61.870	63.595	1.726		
Variance 2024/25		DSG Deficit - Summary		£m	% of DSG			
Schools	(0.583)	Growth Fund	DSG Balance 31/03/2024	(0.630)	(0.30%)			
Central Services	(0.006)		DSG 2024/25	1.726				
High Needs	0.726	EHCP	DSG Balance 31/03/2025	1.096	0.36%			
High Needs	(0.468)	RB and AP						
High Needs	0.503	Special	DSG Management Plan		2025	2026	2027	2028
High Needs	0.238	OLA		£m	£m	£m	£m	
High Needs	0.754	Post 16	Total Expenditure	41.767	43.721	45.144	46.580	
High Needs	0.415	Tuition& Other	DSG Assumed	39.483	40.255	41.463	42.707	
High Needs	0.296	Independent	In Year Position HNB	2.284	3.466	3.681	3.873	
Early Years	(0.149)	Providers	DSG Deficit	0.080	2.364	5.830	9.511	
	1.726		Accumulated Deficit	2.364	5.830	9.511	13.384	
Key Areas of Risk 2024/25								
Schools	Average Inflationary increase of 3.4%. Unknown financial impact of Support staff pay							
High Needs	Continuous increase in EHCP's and demand for specialist places. Insufficient funding.							
Early Years	Expansion of EY offer, limited data available. Provider funding fragile							
Long Term Risk - DSG Accumulated deficit								
A long term solution is required to SEN and the funding available to support schools and the High Need Block.								

EHCP Statistics (25-02-2025)

- Thurrock maintains 2,526 EHCPs and there are 251 open requests for EHCPs.
- 8 mediations planned. (4 refusal to assess)
- 19 Tribunal cases (16 special school place, 3 refusals to issue EHCP)
- 32 CME – 17 in tuition – 9 recently moved in- the remaining children parents refused tuition or tuition not suitable. SEN continue to seek specialist placements.



	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Total
Total	33	35	47	35	60	76	80	35	59	49	56	45	21	631



High Needs Block

High Needs Block 2025/26

- In 2025/26 the High Needs Block funding has an allocation of £41.870m, an increase of £2.787m (7.13%).

High Needs Block	2024/25	2025/26	Change	%
National Funding Formula	£34,688,151	£39,930,514	£5,242,363	
Additional High Needs allocation	£1,603,765	£0	(£1,603,765)	
National Funding Formula - Adjusted	£36,291,916	£39,930,514	£3,638,598	10.03%
Basic Entitlement	£2,755,607	£2,897,562	£141,955	
Teachers Pay/pension supplement	£62,312	£62,312	£0	
Additional funding Special Free School	£717,012	£0	(£717,012)	
Import/Export Adjustments	(£744,000)	(£1,020,000)	(£276,000)	
Total High Needs Funding	£39,082,847	£41,870,388	£2,787,541	7.13%
Transfer from Schools Block	£400,000	£0	(£400,000)	
High Needs Block Budget	£39,482,847	£41,870,388	£2,387,541	6.05%

- In 2025/26, the expansion of the local offer will increase commissioned numbers for the academic year to 904, an increase of 81. This reflects planned expansion of Primary Autism, Secondary SEMH and Specialist provision.
- The new DSG Management Plan forecasts this number to increase to 992 by 2029/30. This reflects forecasted demand in Secondary Autism and Special schools.

Commissioned Numbers 2024 to 2029 - Included in Updated DSG Mgmt. Plan

Commissioned Numbers 2024 to 2029 - Included in Updated DSG Mgmt Plan

Projected Numbers	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2029/30
Chafford Hunderd	3	3	3	3	3
Stanford le Hope	3	3	3	3	3
Nursery	6	6	6	6	6
Arthur Bulgler	10	10	10	10	10
Aveley	10	10	10	10	10
Mossbourne Herd Lane	20	20	20	20	20
Deneholm	10	12	12	12	12
Dilkes	10	10	10	10	10
East Tilbury	10	10	10	10	10
Lansdowne	10	10	10	10	10
Quarry Hill	10	10	10	10	10
Stanford le Hope	5	5	5	5	5
Stifford Clays	10	12	12	12	12
Thameside	6	10	10	10	10
Tilbury	0	10	10	10	10
Warren	18	18	18	18	18
Harris Chaffor Hundred	20	20	20	20	20
Ormiston Park	30	30	30	30	30
St Cleres	17	17	17	17	17
Secondary Autism	0	0	20	30	40
Resource Bases	196	214	234	244	254
Beacon Hill	80	80	80	80	80
Treetops	318	318	318	318	318
Treetops FS	155	155	155	155	155
Special Contingency	0	16	32	48	64
Special	553	569	585	601	617
Olive	85	85	85	85	85
Commissioned Numbers	840	874	910	936	962
Independent North View	30	30	30	30	30
Total	870	904	940	966	992

Hourly Rate

- Within the DSG Management Plan the hourly rate has been updated:

Year	Current Mgmt. Plan	Updated
2024/25	£11.00	£11.00
2025/26	£11.25	£11.30
2026/27	£11.50	£11.60
2027/28	£11.75	£11.90
2028/29	£12.00	£12.20

- Changed the basis the calculation is determined
- Previously 99% assumed @ 9 hours 1% @ 34 hours
- Current data shows this as 97% @ 12 hours and 3% @ 35 hours
- New management plan has used actual hours paid and increased the hours paid by 10% per annum.

Specialist / Resource and AP Provisions

Increased in Band values to be applied from start of new Academic year					3%
Band Descriptor	Band Value 2024/25	Place Funding	MPPG	Top Up Funding	Band Value 2025/26
Mainstream - Primary Band 1	£15,653	£6,000	£4,955	£5,167	£16,122
Mainstream - Primary Band 2	£20,588	£6,000	£4,955	£10,251	£21,206
Mainstream - Primary Band 3	£28,427	£6,000	£4,955	£18,325	£29,280
Mainstream - Primary Band 4	£30,750	£6,000	£4,955	£20,717	£31,672
Mainstream - Primary Band 5	£32,491	£6,000	£4,955	£22,511	£33,466
Mainstream - Primary Band 6	£34,233	£6,000	£4,955	£24,305	£35,260
Mainstream - Primary Band 7	£41,201	£6,000	£4,955	£31,482	£42,437
Mainstream - Primary Band 8	£45,846	£6,000	£4,955	£36,266	£47,221
Mainstream - Secondary Band 1	£15,550	£6,000	£6,465	£3,552	£16,017
Mainstream - Secondary Band 2	£20,545	£6,000	£6,465	£8,696	£21,161
Mainstream - Secondary Band 3	£28,324	£6,000	£6,465	£16,709	£29,174
Mainstream - Secondary Band 4	£30,647	£6,000	£6,465	£19,101	£31,566
Mainstream - Secondary Band 5	£32,389	£6,000	£6,465	£20,896	£33,361
Mainstream - Secondary Band 6	£34,131	£6,000	£6,465	£22,690	£35,155
Mainstream - Secondary Band 7	£41,099	£6,000	£6,465	£29,867	£42,332
Mainstream - Secondary Band 8	£45,744	£6,000	£6,465	£34,651	£47,116
Mainstream - Nursery	£37,160	£0	£0	£38,275	£38,275
AP - Band 1	£31,709	£10,000	£1,628	£21,980	£33,608

Resource Base and AP Funding 2025/26

Academy	Type of Provision	Commissioned Numbers	Band	Top Up Funding	Funding Academice Yr 2025/26
Chafford Hundred	SLCN	3	Nursery	£38,275	£114,825
Stanford le Hope	SEND Nursery	3	Nursery	£38,275	£114,825
Mossbourne Herd Lane	SLCN	20	Primary 2	£10,251	£205,020
East Tilbury	AP	10	Primary 5	£22,511	£225,110
Thameside	AP	10	Primary 5	£22,511	£225,110
Arthur Bugler	Autism	10	Primary 6	£24,305	£243,050
Aveley	Autism	10	Primary 6	£24,305	£243,050
Deneholm	Autism	12	Primary 6	£24,305	£291,660
Dilkes	SEMH	10	Primary 6	£24,305	£243,050
Quarry Hill	SEMH	10	Primary 6	£24,305	£243,050
Stifford Clays	Autism	12	Primary 6	£24,305	£291,660
Tilbury Pioneer	Autism	10	Primary 6	£24,305	£243,050
Lansdowne Rd	LD/Autism	10	Primary 6	£24,305	£243,050
Warren	HI	18	Primary 6	£24,305	£437,490
Stanford le Hope	VI	5	Primary 8	£36,266	£181,330
Ch Hundred - Secondary - A	SLCN	10	Secondary 2	£8,696	£86,963
Ch Hundred - Secondary - B	Autism	10	Secondary 3	£16,709	£167,092
Ormiston	SEMH	30	Secondary 4	£19,101	£573,044
St Cleres HI	HI	10	Secondary 7	£29,867	£298,666
St Cleres VI	VI	7	Secondary 8	£34,651	£242,558
Olive	AP	85	AP 1	£33,608	£2,856,680

Special Schools Band Values

- In 2024/25 Band Values were expanded primarily at the top end to allow greater clarity where more than 1-2-1 support is required.
- However, the gap between each band needs to be reviewed to allow more flexibility in allocating funding.
- Options have been considered to evenly distribute the Band Values, with a comparison against a 3% uplift.
- Legacy funding changes required for 2025/26 need to be considered, with an individual school level value required, that is equal to the sum received in 2024/25.
- Agreed that a £6,500 difference between each band value be implemented.

Special Schools - Band Values + Legacy funding per pupil

THURROCK BAND VALUES								
Increased in Band values to be applied from start of new Academic year								
Type of Provider	Band Descriptor	Place Funding	TPG and TPECG	Top Up Funding	Band Value 2024/25	Place Funding	Top Up Funding	Band Value 2025/26
	Special Band 0	£10,000	£660	£0	£10,660	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Special Schools & Academies	Special Band 1	£10,000	£660	£4,587	£15,247	£10,000	£5,158	£15,158
	Special Band 2	£10,000	£660	£5,457	£16,117	£10,000	£11,658	£21,658
	Special Band 3	£10,000	£660	£17,457	£28,117	£10,000	£18,158	£28,158
	Special Band 4	£10,000	£660	£27,145	£37,805	£10,000	£24,658	£34,658
	Special Band 5	£10,000	£660	£29,134	£39,794	£10,000	£31,158	£41,158
	Special Band 6	£10,000	£660	£35,134	£45,794	£10,000	£37,658	£47,658
	Special Band 7	£10,000	£660	£41,134	£51,794	£10,000	£44,158	£54,158
	Special Band 8	£10,000	£660	£47,134	£57,794	£10,000	£50,658	£60,658
	Special Band 9	£10,000	£660	£53,134	£63,794	£10,000	£57,158	£67,158
AP	AP Band 1	£10,000	£660	£21,049	£31,709	£10,000	£21,980	£31,980

Legacy Grant	Amount 3.4%	TPG and TPECG	Legacy Funding
Treetops Free School	£730	£660	£1,390
Treetops School	£680	£660	£1,340
Beacon Hill Academy	£1,182	£660	£1,842
Olive AP Academy - Thurrock	£968	£660	£1,628

Academic Year Funding 2025/26

Band Descriptor	Place Funding	Top Up Funding	Band Value 2025/26	Treetops		TFS		Beacon Hill	
				No	Funding	No	Funding	No	Funding
Special Band 0	£10,000	£0	£10,000	27	£270,000	14	£140,000	19	£190,000
Special Band 1	£10,000	£5,158	£15,158	110	£1,667,380	55	£833,690		£0
Special Band 2	£10,000	£11,658	£21,658	60	£1,299,480	20	£433,160		£0
Special Band 3	£10,000	£18,158	£28,158	34	£957,372	10	£281,580		£0
Special Band 4	£10,000	£24,658	£34,658	40	£1,386,320	20	£693,160		£0
Special Band 5	£10,000	£31,158	£41,158	30	£1,234,740	20	£823,160	61	£2,510,638
Special Band 6	£10,000	£37,658	£47,658	11	£524,238	8	£381,264		£0
Special Band 7	£10,000	£44,158	£54,158	6	£324,948	8	£433,264		£0
Special Band 8	£10,000	£50,658	£60,658		£0		£0		£0
Special Band 9	£10,000	£57,158	£67,158		£0		£0		£0
Total				318	£7,664,478	155	£4,019,278	80	£2,700,638
Legacy Funding				£1,340	£426,065	£1,390	£215,386	£1,842	£147,343
Total					£8,090,543		£4,234,664		£2,847,981

Commissioned service – Option

To be discussed with Academies/Providers

Detail of 2025/26 Academic Year offer to be reported to June Meeting.

- Following a review of commissioned services, expectation was to contain the new offer within existing resources.

Academic Year Impact - Increase applied from September each year			
	3%	Commissioned Services	
2024/25	2025/26	<u>Academy</u>	2025/26
£394,748	£406,590	Osborne Trust - HI/VI - Outreach	£480,000
£292,005	£300,765	Treetops - Early Years SEND	£250,000
£348,243	£358,690	Treetops - Outreach Autism Primary	£250,000
		Treetops - Outreach Secondary	£0
£194,670	£200,510	Beacon Hill - Outreach	£100,000
£15,000	£15,000	PATT Contract	£15,000
£180,000	£185,400	SEND DBV Primary - Osborne	£185,400
£120,000	£123,600	SEND DBV Secondary - Olive	£123,600
£1,544,666	£1,590,555	Total Commissioned Services	£1,404,000

Tuition

The 2023 *Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs* Guidance states:

- Alternative provision for children with medical needs is funded from local authorities' high needs budgets. However, where a child remains on the roll of their home school but requires a period of time in alternative provision due to their health needs, the local authority and home school may wish to consider the transfer of a portion of the school's funding associated with that child to the alternative provision. This would ensure that the funding follows the child. This arrangement would cease when the child is reintegrated back to their home school or are no longer on the roll of the home school.

Year on Year Costs		2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22
Pupils Not in Schools	Tuition Numbers	67	57	55	59
	Tuition Costs	£674,327	£770,406	£583,308	£481,748
Medical Tuition	Tuition Numbers	34	32	15	15
	Tuition Costs	£494,624	£412,584	£210,523	£224,457
Post 16	Tuition Numbers	13	10	9	6
	Tuition Costs	£199,914	£185,776	£127,047	£94,266
	Professional Costs	£182,997	£114,591	£38,072	£296,253
Post 16 Total		£382,911	£300,367	£165,119	£390,519
Total Tuition Costs		£1,551,862	£1,483,357	£958,950	£1,096,724



Budget 2025/26

Dedicated Schools Grant 2025/26

Dedicated Schools Grant	2024/25	2025/26
	£m	£m
Schools Block	167.156	180.524
Central School Services Block	1.633	1.598
High Needs Block	38.888	41.870
Early Years Block	22.468	30.192
Total	230.145	254.184
SB Recoupment	(161.025)	(174.713)
HNB Recoupment	(7.250)	(7.246)
Total Recoupment	(168.275)	(181.959)
DSG Retained	61.870	72.225

Summary Narrative 2025/26	
Schools	Incorporates full year impact of Core Schools Budget Grant
CSSB	20% Reduction to Historic Commitments
High Needs	7% increase in funding, reflecting increase in demand.
Early Years	Further expansion of the EY offer to 30 hours in 2025/26

High Needs Block 2025/26

High Needs Block	2024/25	2025/26	Change	%
National Funding Formula	£34,688,151	£39,930,514	£5,242,363	
Additional High Needs allocation	£1,603,765	£0	(£1,603,765)	
National Funding Formula - Adjusted	£36,291,916	£39,930,514	£3,638,598	10.03%
Basic Entitlement	£2,755,607	£2,897,562	£141,955	
Teachers Pay/pension supplement	£62,312	£62,312	£0	
Additional funding Special Free School	£717,012	£0	(£717,012)	
Import/Export Adjustments	(£744,000)	(£1,020,000)	(£276,000)	
Total High Needs Funding	£39,082,847	£41,870,388	£2,787,541	7.13%
Transfer from Schools Block	£400,000	£0	(£400,000)	
High Needs Block Budget	£39,482,847	£41,870,388	£2,387,541	6.05%

High Needs Block 2025/26

- Key Risk Areas
 - Continued increase in demand for EHCP's and complexity of need
 - Increase in Post 16 student numbers
 - Increase in Tuition provided
 - Sufficiency of local offer to prevent high-cost external placements

Dedicated Schools Grant - High Needs Block	2024/25 Budget £m	2024/25 Outturn £m	2025/26 CIPFA DSG Mgmt Plan £m	2025/26 UPDATED DSG Mgmt Plan £m	2025/26 RISKS £m	2025/26 Budget £m
High Needs Block	38.888	38.888	40.255	41.870		41.870
Funding Block Transfer	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.000		0.000
Funding Settlement	39.288	39.288	40.255	41.870	0.000	41.870
Place Funding	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.508	(0.042)	0.466
Place Funding Academies to be recouped	7.250	7.250	8.262	7.246		7.246
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Schools & Academies	4.535	5.261	5.176	5.924	(0.539)	5.385
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Resource Provisions	4.672	4.573	5.373	4.699		4.699
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Special Schools	7.871	8.374	8.016	9.291	(0.207)	9.084
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Alternative Provision	2.265	1.895	1.646	1.870		1.870
Top Up Funding - Other Local Authorities (4-16)	1.385	1.623	1.648	1.477	(0.050)	1.427
Top Up Funding - Post 16	2.491	3.273	2.642	4.434	(1.200)	3.234
Pupils not in School	0.540	0.466	0.778	0.666		0.440
Additional High Needs Targeted	0.600	0.790	0.618	0.775	(0.804)	0.600
Medical Tuition	0.193	0.510	0.000	0.504		0.100
Year 11s	0.050	0.033	0.000	0.000		0.000
North View Independent SEMH	0.000	0.000	0.554	0.947	(0.143)	0.804
Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	1.854	1.854	2.206	1.411	(0.500)	0.911
Non Residential - Non Maintained and Independent	2.155	2.451	3.209	2.115		2.115
Commissioned Services	1.245	1.245	1.409	1.591	(0.187)	1.404
Home Hospital Education Services	0.030	0.000	0.031	0.030		0.030
Travellers Team	0.052	0.053	0.053	0.056		0.056
Home to School Transport	1.600	1.600	1.500	1.600		1.600
High Needs Central Team	0.500	0.500	0.600	0.458	(0.058)	0.400
Dedicated Schools Grant	39.288	41.751	43.722	45.601	(3.731)	41.870
(Surplus) / Deficit	(0.000)	2.463	3.466	3.731	(3.731)	(0.000)

DSG Management Plan DBV 2024/25

Table 3c Mitigated and DBV CIPFA	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Total Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mainstream	7.900	8.918	9.504	9.783	10.068	10.362
Resources	5.058	6.346	6.885	7.446	7.921	8.211
Special Schools	12.983	13.727	13.616	13.874	14.122	14.377
NMSS or Independent	4.010	5.253	5.416	5.221	5.380	5.162
Medical or Home Tuition	0.826	0.763	0.809	0.857	0.908	0.962
Post-16 or FE	2.615	2.515	2.642	2.776	2.918	3.067
AP	2.791	2.745	3.350	3.687	3.763	3.841
Other H2S Transport	1.540	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500
Total	37.722	41.767	43.721	45.144	46.580	47.483
DSG Assumed	38.111	39.483	40.255	41.463	42.707	43.988
In Year Position HNB	(0.389)	2.284	3.466	3.681	3.873	3.495
In Year Position Other Funding Blocks	(0.065)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
DSG Deficit/(Surplus)	0.534	0.080	2.364	5.830	9.511	13.385
Accumulated Deficit/(Surplus)	0.080	2.364	5.830	9.511	13.385	16.879

DSG Management Plan 2025/26

Updated 2025/26	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Total Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mainstream	7.621	9.505	10.788	11.190	11.845	12.896
Resources	5.043	5.569	5.695	6.717	7.361	7.935
Special Schools	12.580	13.774	14.691	16.630	18.060	19.439
NMSS or Independent	3.960	4.305	4.472	5.232	5.389	5.266
Medical or Home Tuition	1.078	0.976	1.200	1.272	1.348	1.430
Post-16 or FE	2.563	3.273	4.434	4.629	4.833	5.048
AP	2.721	2.749	2.720	2.925	2.977	3.030
Other H2S Transport	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600
Total	37.165	41.751	45.600	50.195	53.414	56.643
DSG Assumed	38.111	39.288	41.870	43.126	44.420	45.753
In Year Position HNB	(0.946)	2.463	3.730	7.069	8.994	10.890
In Year Position Other Funding Blocks	(0.219)	(0.738)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
DSG Deficit/(Surplus)	0.534	(0.631)	1.094	4.825	11.893	20.887
Accumulated Deficit/(Surplus)	(0.631)	1.094	4.825	11.893	20.887	31.777

DSG Management Plan – Change 2025/26 v DBV

Change	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Total Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£	£
Mainstream	(0.279)	0.587	1.284	1.407	1.778	2.534
Resources	(0.015)	(0.776)	(1.190)	(0.729)	(0.560)	(0.276)
Special Schools	(0.403)	0.046	1.076	2.755	3.938	5.062
NMSS or Independent	(0.050)	(0.948)	(0.943)	0.012	0.009	0.104
Medical or Home Tuition	0.252	0.213	0.391	0.415	0.440	0.467
Post-16 or FE	(0.051)	0.758	1.792	1.852	1.915	1.981
AP	(0.070)	0.004	(0.630)	(0.762)	(0.786)	(0.811)
Other H2S Transport	0.060	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100
Total	(0.557)	(0.016)	1.879	5.051	6.834	9.160
DSG Assumed	0.000	(0.195)	1.615	1.664	1.713	1.765
In Year Position HNB	(0.557)	(0.211)	3.494	6.714	8.547	10.925
In Year Position Other Funding Blocks	(0.154)	(0.738)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
DSG Deficit/(Surplus)	0.000	(0.711)	(1.270)	(1.006)	2.382	7.502
Accumulated Deficit/(Surplus)	(0.711)	(1.270)	(1.006)	2.382	7.502	14.898

DSG Management Plan

Change	Change	Narrative
Total Expenditure	£	
Mainstream	7.311	Increase in EHCP;s and complexity of need
Resources	(3.547)	Reprofiled of Resource base numbers
Special Schools	12.474	Increase in places and complexity of need
NMSS or Independent	(1.817)	Reduction in Unit cost (- 23%) & Placements (-9) (=54)
Medical or Home Tuition	2.179	Reflective of current demand, SF discussion
Post-16 or FE	8.247	Increase in Post 16 numbers
AP	(3.055)	Reflects Placements at North View (Indep)
Other H2S Transport	0.560	Reflect DSG contribution
Total	22.352	
DSG Assumed	6.562	2025/26 updated +3%
In Year Position HNB	15.790	
In Year Position Other Funding Blocks	(0.892)	
DSG Deficit/(Surplus)		
Accumulated Deficit/(Surplus)	14.898	

National Fair Funding Conference 06-03-2025.

Discussion focused primarily on Schools & HNB funding

- 15 factors of Schools NFF. 84% of LA's are mirroring the NFF.
- Spending Review 2026-29 (June 25) – Very difficult and very tight.
 - Expectation that schools will fund 2025/26 - 2.8% Pay Award.
- Ministers keen to review Schools NFF to ensure allocations are fair and reflect relative need.
- 2026/27 any changes will be few, tidy up of factor value weightings.
- 2027/28 potential structural changes e.g. Tiering of low attainment factor – Consultation will be required.
- HNB – Statutory override – Need a solution, high on the agenda but due to scale will be after the Spending Review.
- How to change HNB distribution to help drive mainstream inclusion
- HNB NFF – challenge to ensure use of best data available. E.g. Population, IDACI – Is there anything better? Historic spend is this still relevant? Potential to use Health Related Proxies. Consider the use of direct allocations outside of the formula?

SEND Local Offer and Strategic Planning Group

- This is a subgroup of the school forum that now needs to be formally constituted with an agreed work plan for reports to be developed and reported back into the school forum.
- Currently set at one meeting per term
- Key Topic Area:
 - Sharing the experience and the benefits of Resources Bases.
 - Mainstream Academies have many of the same needs as Specialist placements, how do we further support more mainstream inclusion, recognising the challenges that they face.
 - ECHP funding – Currently paid as an hourly rate. Do we need to review and consider the development of mainstream Band Values.
 - What are options to change the current landscape and support the management of the DSG? How will this link to expected announcements over the coming months.
 - Independent review has been commissioned to understand why Thurrock has 2% more EHCP's than other LA's.
 - How do we plan for the Secondary and Post-16 increase in numbers
 - How do we plan for the increased need for tuition – and how can this be funded.
- Current Future Meeting dates:
 - 22 May 25 at 9am, 9 Oct 25 at 10am; 12 Mar 26 at 10am

Recommendations

The Schools Forum is invited to:

- a) Note and seek clarity on the contents of the report.
- b) Approve, comment on, the HNB 2025/26 budget that includes:
 - Hourly rate to be paid of £11.30.
 - Increase in Band Values as outlined within the report.
 - Commissioned Outreach budget of £1.404m, with detail to be brought back to the June Meeting.
 - Identified Risks of £3.731m.
 - Impact of the changes on the DSG Management Plan 2025/26 to 2028/29 of £14.898m.
- c) To consider the membership, remit and workplan of the SEND Local Offer and Strategic Planning Group.



Thurrock Budget 2025/26



Thurrock 2025/26

- The Council's financial position is challenging and will remain so for several years.
- The Council requires exceptional financial support (EFS) from central government to achieve its legal requirement to set a balanced budget for the forth coming year.
- The support is given through a Capitalisation Direction (CD) that is estimated to be £691m, over the seven-year period 2022/23 to 2028/29.
- The 2025/26 revenue budget required is £240.7m to cover the operating budget of £176.4m and treasury costs of £64.3m. As the Council's core funding is £168.5m, the Council requires an estimated CD of £72.1m to set a legally balanced budget.
- Over the seven years, the total estimated CD requirement of £691m is funding a £57m shortfall against the council's operating budget and a cost of £634m to cover treasury costs to support council debt.
- The Council is making good progress with the financial targets it must achieve. The budget for 2024/25 includes a significant savings target of £19.866m of which 86% is delivered or on track to be delivered.

Thurrock 2025/26

Included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29 are the following savings requirements:

MTFS 2025/26 to 2028/29	£m
2025/26	18.200
2026/27	13.650
2027/28	13.650
2028/29	13.650
Total Savings required	59.150

The 2025/26 budget savings of £18.2m are being achieved from the following Directorates.

Children Services continues to be protected.

Budget Savings 2025/26	£m
Organisational Change	0.709
Adult Social Care	5.784
Children Services	2.149
Corporate Services	1.071
Finance	3.292
Place	4.370
Contingency Pay Award 2.5%	0.825
Total	18.200

Children Services 2025/26

Children Services Budget Reductions 2025/26		
Project Name	Headline Description	2025/26
Home to School Transport	Following a procurement exercise in 2024, new Home to School contracts were negotiated and commenced in September 2024. Within the new contracts the price is fixed for the first two years after which it may be adjusted to Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation.	£732,000
Grangewater commercialisation opportunities	This proposal focuses on enhanced capacity and commercial activity across the Grangewaters site, increasing footfall, utilisation and usage from the community and surrounding areas whilst simultaneously continuing to provide the current range of services (including activity spaces for Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) and schools).	£150,000
Looked After Children - Placements	IMPOWER have been appointed support a cross-section of frontline teams to identify the level and scale of opportunity available to deliver better outcomes that cost less, based on the completion of IMPOWER's Valuing Care approach for a representative cohort of children in care. This will identify and deliver additional opportunities for reunification with families, step down from residential care to foster families, opportunities to strengthen foster carer recruitment, retention, matching and support.	£768,000
Looked After Children - Cost Management	The refurbishment and conversion of Local Authority housing stock into a Children's Home for Thurrock looked after children with complex needs will be used for children who have historically been challenging to find suitable home placements and where significant costs have been incurred.	£323,000
Childrens Services Management Review	It is proposed to streamline management reporting lines in children's social care management and utilise the Designated School Grant (DSG) to support the role of school effectiveness. This reflects increased management oversight in support of the expansion of the Early Years 9 month to 2-year-old working parent offer.	£176,000
		£2,149,000

Childrens Services Growth	2025/26
	£000's
Growth - Childrens Social Care Placements Price Inflation	1,086
Growth - Childrens Social Care Placements Budget Adjustment	2,129
Growth - Education Home to School Transport Inflation	0
Growth - Education Home to School Transport Growth	313
Growth - Education DSG - CSSB Grant Adjustment	84
Children Services Total	3,612

Childrens Services Budget	2025/26
	£000's
Budget 2024/25	47,466
Staff Incremental Pay Increase	260
Change in National Insurance	494
Growth	3,612
Reductions	(2,149)
Original Budget 2025/26	49,683
Contingency Pay Award 2.5%	767
Budget 2025/26	50,450