



Derby City Council

Schools Forum
12 February 2026
4.30pm – 6pm
Via Teams

Present		
Mike Pride (Chair)	Academy Special	
David Blackwell	Primary Academy	
David Boulter	NEU	
Janet Bowzler	Finance, DCC	
Charlotte Brett	PVI Rep	
Sharon Buckby	Director, Learning, Inclusion and Skills, DCC	
Pete Cade	Governor Rep	
Karen Clarke	Governor Rep	
Aaron Denton	Post 16 Rep	
Jonathan Gallimore	Primary Academy	
Ashley Guest	Maintained Primary	
Janice Hadfield	Head of Finance, DCC	
Karen Hayes	Free School	
Michelle Lowe	Observer	
Sarah Warren	Business Operations Manager	
Neil Wilkinson	Maintained Secondary	
Apologies		
Ian Dewes		
Cllr Paul Hezelgrave		
No.	Item	Actions
	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting SB action Re: matrix was carried forward to the next meeting AG confirmed the matter re: voting had been concluded It was agreed that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting.</p>	
01/26	<p>DSG Budget 2026/27 JH summarised the report through a presentation, which is attached.</p> <p>The report talks through allocations and impacts on allocations for government mainstreaming grants.</p> <p>Slide 2 shows all that is required by the School Forum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To note the allocations of the Dedicated Schools Grant as detailed in the report • To note the affordability and approved top slice from school's block £1.394m • To support recommendations for funding formula on school's block • To support recommendations for the Early Years funding rates to providers 	 Feb 26 - DSG budget.pptx



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- To support the value of the Growth Fund
- To note the 2026/27 HNB deficit of a£9.966m giving a cumulative deficit across all blocks at the end of 2026/27 of £33.956m.
- To note the 3 appendices with school level detail – currently confidential papers

The School Forum agreed to support all the recommendations laid out above.

JH picked out points in the presentation

- 26/27 the schools block is seeing an increase of 3.2% for Primary and 2.2% for secondary, noting both per pupils amount include the mainstreaming of grants into the school block, previously these were paid separately to schools
- 26/27 DSG allocations reflect the continued change in the process for national non-domestic rates whereby the DfE will pay billing authorities directly for both academy and maintained schools
- There will be separate grant for the extension of free school meals, paid in addition to the mains schools block funding, value to be announced.
- On appendix 3 in the report, notional amount is included in each school budget, £44.5m across all schools.
- Early Years Block – Page 6/7 of the report sets out the national context, section 3.8 for the new financial year.
- Key adjustments for 2026/ -27 the government will be introducing head counts, early years count process will be in line with existing parent entitlement for 2 year olds and under stated in section 1.3. To be noted for the first time moving away from participation funding calculated on January census for 3 to 4 year olds and additional support 2 year olds (the two original formula entitlements)
- For 2026 to 2027, the government are increasing the minimum pass-through rate to 97% (from 96% in 2025 to 2026).
- SEND/High needs block, national context, 26/27 the government have suspended the high needs funding formula, the places that we have on census Oct 2024 there is a real gap due to no funding for growth or inflation.
- There has been an announcement from central government that they are going to be providing local authorities with 90% grant funding to cover the DSG deficit at the end of the current financial year, various criteria around this, not defined what the funding will be in future years.

SB reiterated that there has been £3m underfunding for high needs block 26/27 that shifts back to October 2024 and no inflation and rolling in of all grants which means the projection will be reducing in year deficit for next year which will increase by default cost for children allocated. Government have also said that the Schools White Paper and the separate SEND consultation paper, will be released week commencing 23 February 2026 however likely to be the week after and there will be some indication that there will be additional reform funding for schools and the Local Authority, how this will be pulled together is unclear at the moment.

Once the White Paper and consultation is available the LA will have a conversation of what it looks like. SB was due to have a meeting with MAT CEO's however this has now been put back a month to give all chance to gain an understanding of the reforms and how it looks for Derby.

	<p>SB will bring this back to the next School Forum meeting to look at this more closely.</p> <p>CB asked a question around reforms for the government how going to manage SEND and High Needs with Early Years as an addition. SB doesn't know at this moment in time. Early years was lower than expected and also had to allow for an allocation to meet the contingency requirements for Early Years and uplift hourly rates as close to the national allocation as possible.</p> <p>JH continued with the presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSG Allocations £396,232m which is made up of four blocks • On page 8 of the report sets out the increase of £12m in the schools block in 26/27 from the 25/26 allocation. 4.5% increase is due to mainstreaming of grants, excluding the grants the increase is 2.59%. • Point 4.5 Page 10 there is a graph which shows the reduced growth impacting on affordability. Derby is in a good position as have been funding schools at 100%, minimum funding levels, listed in Appendix 1, which gives the breakdown for each school, final columns in report shows changes in numbers on roll. • Four schools listed on Appendix 2 who are on the minimum funding guarantee, • top slice of 0.5% was approved by School Forum in December 2025 meeting, • applied a cap on growth of 2% and scaled back, this has been necessary to afford the increased number of pupils eligible for FSM • JH explained capping and scaling (Slide 12) • School Budget MFG explained (Slide 13) • JH to share slides with minutes (attached) • Central School Services Block continues to be reduced, just over £2m per year, the reduction is circa £0.110m next year, Council makes up the funding • Page 12 of the report notes the Early Years Block allocation of just under £50m. Principles that are adopted by Derby City Council are explained in Slide 16 of the presentation. • High Needs Block allocation is set out on Page 15 section 6 of the report. Derby suffered a pressure of £3m, no inflation, suspension of HNFF • Mapped out high needs budget – table on page 16 shows allocation and the requirement against allocation, not a lot of differences, significant reduction of budget of independent schools reduced by £2m and increased funding for special schools. In year forecast deficit just under £10m leaving a forecast cumulative deficit of £33.5m. • KH asked about the current EHC growth rate. SB is waiting for analysis however there has been a 3800 reduction over 4 months, growth not as rapid as it has been, additional support has been put in place ie workforce, inclusion curricular work, SENCO's looking how needs to be met in schools environments. • JH remarked on Conclusion slide, Slide 19 for School Forum to note and support. 	<p>SB</p>
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	<p>School Forum discussed the decision to share the papers with the wider school community or keep within school forum.</p> <p>There were concerns for some schools and SB commented that the drop in numbers on roll were very worrying.</p> <p>NW commented to be careful the number of SEND children as there is a massive variation, and need to make sure that this is reflected in provision for young people and they are getting and not a means to generate income.</p> <p>DB asked why there would any reason not to be transparent, as we were last year.</p> <p>It was agreed School Forum would share the reports and appendices around their groups.</p> <p>SB thanks JH for the great presentation and MP thanked all.</p>	
<p>02/26</p>	<p>Any Other Business None</p>	

Date of next meeting – 7 July, 4.30pm, via Teams