



Derby City Council

Schools Forum
Tuesday 6 July 2026
4.30pm – 6pm
Microsoft Teams

Present		
Mike Pride (Chair)	Academy Special	
David Blackwell	Primary Academy	
Janet Bowlzer	Group Accountant, DCC	
Charlotte Brett	PVI Representative	
Sharon Buckby	Director for Learning, Inclusion and Skills, DCC	
Cheryl Fearn	Union Representative	
Jonathan Gallimore	Primary Academy	
Ashley Guest	Maintained Primary	
Janice Hadfield	Head of Finance, DCC	
Karen Hayes	Free School	
Kieran Picken	National Education Union (observer)	
Sara Warren	School Operations Manager – Maintained Secondary	
Neil Wilkinson	Secondary Maintained	
Apologies		
Ian Dewes		
Pete Cade		
No.	Item	Actions
01/26	Minutes of the previous meeting Action regarding Early Years Inclusion Fund, if there is an underspend how would be it be distributed within schools? JB commented modelling has been done following the guidance, it has been to the Early Years Strategy Group and at the moment is being assessed by colleagues. The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.	
02/26	DSG Outturn 2205/26 JH produced slides to explain the Outturn which are attached. • Overall the allocation of £375.241m is split across the Blocks • Outturn in-year deficit of £7.085m which is higher than the original budget, therefore marginally positive. • Cumulative DSG deficit position of £23.274m is in line with the national trends however remains a significant challenge for Derby, with a cost pressure to the LA of 2m. • Maintained schools surplus balance is just under £9m and there are 5 schools that are a deficit position. • Small underspend of £145k, this block funds all mainstream schools.	



Derby City Council

	• The budget was for more additional places than actually required in the year. The small underspend was on the non domestic rates and any underspend will be returned to the DSG. • Notional funding part of the schools block was around £41m. • Central Block is in a balanced position, no underspend although the allocation does reduce every year. • Expecting some clawbacks from Early Years funding, accrued £900k clawback from placements that have not been taken up. The problem with the stretched funding offer was that the hours have not been used and the funding cannot be carried over, so that brings pressure for the new financial year. To help in the future will be funding Early Years providers on hours taken up rather than being taken. • High Needs Block, main areas are bulleted in the slides ie ➢ Post 16 education placements £1.3m pressure, increased numbers in Derby College and DCC FE provision, which is good as remaining in the City this adds cost pressures. ➢ Maintained schools Element 3 pressure Number of EHCP Plans rose from 749 in March 2025 to 1300 by March 2026 due to SEND Team clearing the backlog of delayed plans. By April 26 there are no delayed plans as these have all been addressed. ➢ Other LA schools £0.527m pressure due to increased number of placements in a Derbyshire County Special School ➢ Staffing and contingency underspend of £1.633m which will partially offset the pressures. • Reserves position. The government has extended the DSG statutory override for the core period of 3 years to April 2028. • The government has pledged to over 90% of historical SEND deficits accrued up to the end of 25/26. • Although LA's will not receive any payments until the Local SEND Reform Plan has been approved. • There are currently 33 maintained schools in Derby, total balances held by all schools was recoded as £9.248m, increase from last year of £645k, surplus balances from most schools ranged from 1% to 170% of the school budget. The 5 schools that have reported a deficit position are already part of the planned deficit recovery, who are Ashgate Nursery, Central Nursery, Portway infant, Wren Park Primary and Gayton Junior. • The summary of De-delegation is noted on the table in the De-delegation 25-2 slide. All areas were reported as fully spent. KH asked with regard to the SEND Reform Plan what milestones will there be in terms of approval, what happens to the DSG deficit over the next 2/3 years. SB explained it was going through the approval process, ie through the Regional Directors office and on to the City Servants National Team and expecting a response in the Autumn, probably December. No indication	
--	--	--

	for what will happen the following year and 2028 will depend what the LGR as will inherit debt from Derbyshire. There will be continued support for the next 2 years but not sure what that will look like but not the 90% in the future. MP – rate of EHCP, expecting any challenge? Referrals of stat neighbours in 2025 is down by 8% of referrals and continuous decline for this calendar year as well as the referral rate is going down. In terms of independence sector there are getting fewer requests from independent schools. SB - The issue is the ongoing increase in fees, fewer number parents are happy with the provision in the local area, which is good, local offer is first and foremost increased number of places in maintain/special oppose to independent. 7% independent sector a further projection decreased for independent this year.	
03/26	DSG 2026 – 27 JH commented on the slides attached. • The DSG remains split across four funding blocks aligned to statutory responsibilities. • Q1 26/27 is reporting a balanced position • Notional SEN – £44.8m, there's a graph on page 2 of the report which gives a breakdown. • Central schools services block – £2.355m. Further ongoing reductions are to be expected to be offset by the Councils general fund. • Early Years Block, allocation just under £48m • New termly census means Council will only receive funding for those on the census. If a parent is entitled, the council will have to fund this, this is new territory, may need to use contingency budget after census, monitoring very closely. • DAF funding, part of inclusion environment review. Underspend in the DAF last year, looking at how can use funding more effectively. • Underspends from staffing and contingency budgets helping to offset pressures emerging. • From September 2026 teachers and leaders will receive a pay award of 3.5%, followed by a further 3.0% increase from September 2027. This was only announced last week. • Sept 26 ending the transitional protection, in effect move to 2 tier FSM, targeted 3 school meals, children in households receive benefit, household income £7400 per year. Ongoing eligibility checks. • NW commented a number of schools will have a drop of budget.	

	What will happen around expectations pupil premium attainment, how will this be budget what will happen to PP strategy linked to what happens to enrichments? • SB informed NW there were regular meetings with finances within schools. • JH will circulate the slides with School Forum	JH
04/26	Confidential report around the implementation of the resource allocation tool. Marked as confidential and not to be circulated widely but will go out to every headteacher.	
05/26	Any Other Business None MP thanked everyone for the presentations and wished everyone a restful Summer when it arrives.	