

Agenda

Herefordshire Schools Forum

Date: **Friday 11 July 2025**

Time: **9.30 am**

Place: **virtual meeting platform**

Notes: Please note the time, date and venue of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Jenny Preece, Democratic Services Officer on 01432 261699 or e-mail jennypreece@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the Meeting of the Herefordshire Schools Forum

Membership

Chairperson	Alison Banner	LA maintained secondary schools
Vice-Chairperson	Paul Jennings	Academies
	Beverley Blower	PRU - Management Committee
	Dan Brearey	LA Maintained Primary School
	Alex Davies	Academies (primary)
	Paul Deneen	Trade Unions
	Nicki Emmett	Academies
	Richard Foster	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
	Nicki Gilbert	LA Special Schools
	Andy Gosling	Secondary Governors
	Georgie Griffin	Primary Governors
	Sue Jenkins	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
	Tim Knapp	Academies
	Chris Lewandowski	Trade Unions
	Rose Lloyd	Early Years
	Hayley Manns	Early Years providers
	Gemma Martin	Diocese of Hereford
	Clare Perez	16-19 Providers
	Rachel Ussher	LA Maintained Primary School

Agenda

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY) To receive any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Forum.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
4. MINUTES To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2025.	5 - 8
5. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2024/25 OUTTURN, SEN PROTECTION SCHEME, AND DSG DEFICIT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES To report the recommendations of the Budget Working Group to Schools Forum regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2024/25 Outturn, Special Education Needs (SEN) Protection scheme future options, and Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Management plan strategies.	9 - 36
6. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION To report on the annual review of membership of Herefordshire Schools Forum (the forum) and Budget Working Group (the working group) and to approve action as necessary to maintain proportionality and to recommend the adoption of the amended constitution.	37 - 74
7. DATES OF MEETINGS AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2025/26 To approve dates for meetings to be held and the work programme for the forum for 2025/26 academic year. The following dates are suggested: Friday, 24 October 2025 9:30am Friday, 23 January 2026 9:30am Friday, 20 March 2026 9:30am Friday, 10 July 2026 9:30am	75 - 76



Minutes of the meeting of Herefordshire Schools Forum held on a virtual meeting platform on Friday 14 March 2025 at 9.30 am

Present:	Ms A Banner (LA maintained secondary schools) (Chairperson)
	Mr P Jennings (Academies) (Vice-chairperson)
Ms B Blower	PRU - Management Committee
Mr A Davies	Academies (primary)
Mr P Deneen	Trade Unions
Ms N Emmett	Academies
Mr R Foster	Local Authority Maintained Primary School
Ms N Gilbert	LA Special Schools
Mr A Gosling	Secondary Governors
Mr T Knapp	Academies
Mr C Lewandowski	Trade Unions
Mrs R Lloyd	Early Years
Ms H Manns	Early Years providers
Ms C Perez	16-19 Providers
Ms R Ussher	LA Maintained Primary School

In attendance:

Officers: Senior Finance Business Partner, Service Director, Education, Skills and Learning, Head of Additional Needs and Strategic Finance Manager, Finance Business Partner for Education and Schools.

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Gemma Martin.

Officers:

Louise Tanner - Head of Learning and Achievement

18. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

There were no named substitutes.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Deneen declared an interest in item 5 on the agenda as representative of the trade union.

20. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

21. HIGH NEEDS BUDGET 2025/26

The Senior Finance Business Partner (SFBP) provided the forum with a presentation the following principal points were noted:

- The gross high needs block allocation for 2025/26 is £28.9 million. (7.6% year on year increase).
- An additional £1.1 Million had been transferred from the Schools Block funding (SEN Protection scheme), the Early Years Block for the SEN inclusion fund, and Central Block.
- It was noted for 25/26, that the grant structure within high needs had changed. The teachers pay award grant, the teacher's pension employers contribution grant and the core schools budget grant uplift were going to be rolled into one grant called the Core Schools Budget Grant.
- Q3 forecast deficit on High Needs block in 2024/25 is £11.1 million, which will result in a £17.2 million deficit as at 31st March 2025. The main cause for this was independent school places. From January 24 to December 24, there had been an increase of 68% on new placements and this is due to a shortage of local authority special school places. Other drivers included top ups and increases in Education Care Health Plans (ECHP).
- The DSG deficit is currently ring fenced from overall financial position in the statutory accounts until March 26, but that legislation revokes itself in March 26 and would have to start rolling that deficit into the council reserves, a huge risk for Herefordshire Council and for all councils nationally.
- The SFBP took the forum through the High Needs Block 2025/26 allocation and the main year on year increases.
- Detailed modelling undertaken by the Council proposed that the high needs block funding required 45.7 million which produced a deficit in year of £20.2 million and would produce a cumulative deficit of £37.4 million as at 31st March 2026.
- It was noted a change had been made to the trade unions SLA.
- The SFBP provided the forum with two options for the funding of the SEN protection scheme. Detailed modelling had been completed, and some options and compromises would have to be made to aid with affordability.
- It was noted Option 1 had a Full Year cost of £2 million+ for 2025/26 and was considered unaffordable given the pressures on the High Needs Block.
- Option 2 which had been recommended by the Budget Working Group, had a Full Year cost of £1.5 million and was the Council's preferred option for the high needs block budget 2025/26. It was highlighted that new options would need to be considered for the 2026/27 budget given the increasing costs of the SEN Protection scheme, and the affordability given the deficit on the high needs block.

The chair offered her thanks to the SFBP for her clear and informative presentation.

In response to member's questions, it was noted:

1. The Service Director, Education, Skills and Learning (SDESL) confirmed there had been an exponential rise in special school placements in the independent sector due to increased demand for specialist education and that is It is likely to continue to increase unless there is significant funding into the Herefordshire Special School Estates. All Herefordshire Special Schools are full. The department continues to lobby the Department for Education around building projects, whether that be rebuilding or new buildings because unless Herefordshire can expand provision the rise in out of county places will continue to increase. It was highlighted that the f40, are calling for significant change and it was noted that this is not just a local issue, and the same challenges are being experienced nationally.
2. The SDESL highlighted that whilst being very aware of the impact of the deficit on the council potentially from March 2026, the council is mindful of its statutory duty to ensure that children have a school place that meets their needs and supporting schools to do that. Spending would continue but from a deficit management perspective, the SEN protection scheme would be reviewed so that

it is well targeted to supporting schools with the inclusion agenda where necessary.

The Chair of the budget working group fed back the views of the group, they were supportive of option 2, appreciating the current deficit and projected deficits moving forward. The group had always given their support to the SEN Protection scheme and would continue to do so for as long as possible. Without the extra funding it would have a detrimental effect to those pupils that required additional support and concerns were raised of the impact that could have on those young people and the schools that are working hard to support them.

Resolved

That the forum recommends a High Needs Budget of £45.7 million for 2025/26 for approval by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3, noting the funding gap in 2025/26 of £20.2 million (253% higher than the funding gap agreed for 2024/25).

22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 11 July 2025, 9:30am.

The meeting ended at 10.16 am

Chairperson



Title of report: Dedicated Schools Grant 2024/25 Outturn, SEN Protection Scheme, and DSG Deficit Management Strategies

Meeting: Herefordshire Schools Forum

Meeting date: Friday 11 July 2025

Report by: Senior Finance Business Partner

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To report the recommendations of the Budget Working Group to Schools Forum regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2024/25 Outturn, Special Education Needs (SEN) Protection scheme future options, and Dedicated Schools Grant Deficit Management plan strategies.

Recommendation(s)

That the Forum:

- a) **Notes the final Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn position for 2024/25;**
- b) **Considers the recommendations of the Budget Working Group (BWG) held on 27 June 2025 regarding the SEN Protection scheme;**
- c) **Considers the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit Management Plan service led discussion.**

Alternative options

1. The Budget Working Group (BWG) was consulted on the recommendations as listed above. The Children and Families Act (2014) requires the council to ensure that the needs of pupils are met and the council is required to adhere to the Department for Education's (DfE) prescribed arrangements for school and Local Authority as set out in regulations.
2. The Budget Working Group were consulted re. the SEN Protection scheme from 2026/27 onwards. The Service Director for Education outlined plans for the discontinuation of the SEN Protection scheme from 2026/27 onwards, with associated savings partly contributing to the SEN inclusion pathway (as described below) and the high needs block deficit.

Key considerations

3. The council receives funding for schools and designated central services via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is a ring-fenced grant and is allocated by the Department for Education (DfE) in four blocks: Schools, Central School Services, High Needs and Early Years. Allocations are based on the DfE's National Funding Formula (NFF) arrangements. This report considers the DSG 2024/25 final outturn position, as well as how the schools block and high needs block funding will be used in relation to the SEN Protection scheme from 2026/27 onwards. Finally, strategies to manage the high needs block deficit will be considered as part of the DSG Deficit Management Plan completion.
4. The Budget Working Group (BWG) was established to provide an opportunity for officers and schools to consider the ongoing use of Dedicated Schools Grant funding, and to make recommendations to the Herefordshire Schools Forum.

DSG Final Outturn 2024/25

5. The final outturn position for 2024/25 is a deficit of £13.9 million as highlighted in the table below:

DSG Allocation	DSG Funding £'000	DSG Outturn £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
Schools Block	129,938	129,938	0	0%
Less Block Transfer	(650)	(650)	0	0%
Less recoupment	(63,147)	(63,153)	(6)	0%
Less NNDR	(1,314)	(1,314)	0	0%
Schools Block	64,828	64,821	(6)	0%
High Needs Block	26,817			
Add Block Transfer	877			
Less recoupment	(3,780)			
High Needs	23,914	37,587	13,673	57%
Early Years Block	16,979	17,219	240	1%
Central School Services Block	778	743	(35)	-5%
Net Expenditure	106,499*	120,370	13,871	13%

**Funding as per DfE website 31/3/25 = £106,589k. Funding in table above is £90k lower as we have included a spring adjustment for early years using Jan25 census data (driven by lower 2YO PTE - funding true up will be in Jul25 by DfE).*

On 1st April 2024, the cumulative deficit brought forward was £6.1million. The outturn position for 2024/25 is an overspend of £13.9 million. This increases the council's cumulative DSG deficit to £20.0 million at 31 March 2025.

6. The main drivers of the in year 2024/25 deficit of £13.9 million are as follows:
 - **High needs block outturn** is £13.7 million higher than funding with the main drivers being £6 million independent schools (circa 190 placements at year end), £1.9 million top ups, £6 million budget deficit built into 2024/25 budget (Schools Forum advised of this in Jan24).
 - **Early Years block** outturn is £240k higher than funding driven by a late Easter date (20th April 2025) resulting in higher payments; this will offset in 2025/26 funding.
 - **Central block** outturn £35k less than funding driven by favourability in staff in the admissions cost centre (due to vacancy/delay in hiring).
 - **Schools block** in line with budget.
7. The cumulative DSG deficit is accounted for as an unusable reserve on the council's Balance Sheet, as permitted via statutory instrument, which will remain in place until 31 March 2028 (extended by 2 years on 20th June 2025). This enables all local authorities to ring-fence the DSG deficit from the overall financial position in the statutory accounts. Beyond the period of the statutory override, the expectation is that any balance on the DSG Unusable Reserve will transfer back to the council's total Earmarked Reserves.
8. The risk to the council's overall financial position once the override period ends is being monitored alongside the assessment of the adequacy of the council's reserves, as part of the council's medium term financial strategy. It should be noted that this issue is a major concern amongst local authorities nationally.
9. Measures to contain the deficit and mitigate future cost and demand pressures will be managed by the Service through the DSG Deficit Management Plan and the financial impact of agreed mitigations will be monitored and reported throughout the year as part of the council's routine budget monitoring processes.

SEN Protection Scheme - 2026/27 onwards

10. The SEN protection scheme was expanded to include secondary schools in 2020/21 and was supported by a transfer of £0.6m from the schools block in both 2023/24 and 2024/25. The cost of the scheme continues to grow each year, and the scheme is hugely supported by schools. However, the cost of the scheme is at the limit that the Schools Forum can approve without reference to the Secretary of State and expenditure is forecast to grow further in 2025/26 and subsequent years. Also, the scheme was originally created to reward the most SEN inclusive schools. The reality is that payments are given to all schools who provide top ups, and hence the scheme has lost its original purpose.
11. In January 2025 the Schools Forum voted on a schools block funding transfer to the high needs block in order to continue to fund the SEN Protection scheme for 2025/26. In March 2025 options for the 2025/26 SEN Protection scheme, based on affordability, were presented to the Schools Forum. Schools Forum recommended to Cabinet Option 2 which meant the calculation method was changed to:

(SEN child number x £5,052) – (NOR *£185 (Cap))

Basic entitlement primary	£3,790.90
Basic entitlement KS3	£5,342.27
Basic entitlement KS4	£6,022.91
Average	£5,052.03

	Cap	Cost		Schools block transfer	High Needs Block contribution
2024-25 (final cost)	£175.00	£1,564,000		£650,000	£914,000
2025-26	£185.00	£1,543,554		£690,827	£852,727

12. In the March 2025 Schools Forum it was noted that due to affordability issues for both the schools block and the high needs block (given the high needs deficit position), that different options would need to be considered for 2026/27 going forward or even discontinued.
13. Subsequent to this, further modelling has now been undertaken, and given that the SEN Protection scheme doesn't reward only the most inclusive schools (which was it's original purpose), and given affordability issues across the schools and high needs block, it was proposed to Budget Working Group that the SEN Protection scheme is discontinued from 2026/27 onwards. The Budget Working Group recommended that further modelling was required, and that the discontinuation of the scheme should be on a more phased basis as schools rely on this funding.
14. The high needs block cumulative deficit is forecast as at 31st March 2026 to be £40.2 million. The Council needs to put in place strategies using central high needs block funding to mitigate and manage the current deficit. As per the Budget Working Group recommendation, further modelling has now been completed and the proposal for Schools Forum is that the SEN Protection scheme should be discontinued and the budget (using £1.5 million as per budget 2025/26) should be repurposed, using a phased approach, from 2026/27 onwards as follows:
- No Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer in 2026/27 – **£690k** (2025/26 value) retained in Schools Block. Possible uses: 2026/27 funding formula allocations can be increased to all schools by increasing factors, Minimum Funding Guarantee adjustment to increase school allocations, or a growth fund could be set up to manage rising and falling rolls in school. **This is a compromise for 2026/27 and the block transfer process will be reviewed at budget 2027/28.**
 - **£250k** used to mitigate high needs block deficit
 - To fund strategies within the DSG deficit management plan (as outlined in Appendix 1) such as the expansion of the SEMH inclusion team to include more specialist staff to support a wider range of needs directly in schools, and increase commissioned short and long stay intervention spaces for pupils with SEMH as a primary need, to cover all age ranges. Costs for these strategies equate to **£560k**.

DSG Deficit Management Plan Strategies

15. See Appendix 1

Community impact

16. These services contribute to delivery of the following ambitions in the adopted Council Plan for 2024-2028:

People - We will enable residents to realise their potential, to be healthy and benefit from communities that help people to feel safe and supported

Place - We will protect and enhance our environment and ensure that Herefordshire remains a great place to live. We will support the right housing in the right place and do everything we can to improve the health of our rivers

Growth - We will create the conditions to deliver sustainable growth across the county; attracting inward investment, building business confidence, creating jobs, enabling housing development along with providing the right infrastructure

Transformation - We will be an efficient council that embraces best practice, delivers innovation through technology and demonstrates value for money

Environmental Impact

17. This is a consultation with Schools Forum on 2024/25 DSG outturn, SEN Protection scheme & DSG Deficit Management plan, and will therefore have no direct environmental impacts. School governing bodies and trustees are responsible for deciding on expenditure and they will be encouraged to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

18. Due to the potential impact of this project/decision/activity being low, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. However the following equality considerations should be taken into account when making a decision about this activity/project:
- a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Resource implications

19. As at 1 April 2024 the cumulative high needs budget deficit for Herefordshire Council was £6.1 million. Adding the in year 2024/25 deficit of £13.9 million means that as at 1 April 2025 the cumulative deficit position is £20.0 million.
20. It is essential that the council continues to monitor the performance against budget in 2025/26 to identify and manage emerging cost pressures.

Legal Implications

21. The Schools Forum Regulations 2012 states that the School Forums generally have a consultative role. However, there are situations in which they have decision-making powers, as detailed in Regulation 10. The Regulations state that the council must consult the Schools Forum annually in connection with amendments to the school funding formula, for which voting is restricted by the exclusion of non- school members except for private, voluntary, independent representatives. Voting on de-delegation and the education functions for maintained schools is restricted to maintained school members only.
22. The decision making powers of the Schools Forum are limited, as detailed in the Education and Skills Funding Agency guidance sheet 'School Forum Powers and Responsibilities' published in March 2020.
23. This budget has been set in accordance with the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023.

Risk Management

24. The Budget Working Group (BWG) reviews proposals in detail prior to making recommendations to the Schools Forum. This two stage process helps to ensure greater scrutiny of budget proposals and mitigate against any risks that may be identified. Any identified risks will be monitored and managed by the Children and Young People directorate jointly with the Schools Forum.

Consultees

25. The Budget Working Group were consulted on 27th June 2025 and were provided with all options regarding the future of the SEN Protection scheme. They recommended a more phased approach for the discontinuation of the SEN Protection scheme with further excel modelling required. This has been provided in the document above.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Schools forum presentation slides

Background papers

None

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

BWG	Budget Working Group (of Schools Forum)
CAMHS	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
DfE	Department for Education
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group

NFF	National Funding Formula
CLEAPPS	Advisory service for schools to support with science and technology
EHCP	Education Health Care Plan
NEF	Nursery Education Funding
2YO	Two year olds
34YO	Three and Four year olds
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MFG	Minimum Funding Guarantee – a funding mechanism by DfE to provide a funding protection mechanism to smooth budget losses over a number of years
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
H3	Home and Hospital Teaching Team (Hub, Home, Hospital)
SEN	Special Education Needs
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disability
SENIF	Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (Early Years)
TPAG	Teachers' pay additional grant
TPECG	Teachers' pension employer contribution grant
CBGG	Core schools budget grant

Appendix 1

Schools Forum

11th July 2025

For discussion:

- DSG 2024/25 Outturn
- SEN Protection scheme continuation
- DSG Deficit Management plan strategies

Year end 2024/25 results

DSG Allocation	DfE Funding (inc Block transfers) £'000	DfE Outturn (inc Block £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
Schools Block	129,938	129,938	(0)	0%
Less Block Transfer	(650)	(650)	0	0%
Less recoupment	(63,147)	(63,153)	(6)	0%
Less NNDR	(1,314)	(1,314)	(0)	0%
Schools Block	64,828	64,821	(6)	0%
High Needs Block	26,817			
Add Block Transfer	877			
Less recoupment	(3,780)			
High Needs	23,914	37,587	13,673	57%
Early Years Block	16,979	17,219	240	1%
Central School Services Block	778	743	(35)	-5%
Net Expenditure	106,499	120,370	13,871	13%

- Funding as per DfE website 31/3/25 = £106,589k. Funding in table above is £90k lower as we have included a spring adjustment for early years using Jan24 census data (driven by lower 2YO PTE - funding true up will be in Jul25 by DfE).

Main drivers of deficit

- **Schools block** in line with budget.
- **Central block** outturn £35k less than funding driven by favourability in staff in the admissions cost centre (due to vacancy/delay in hiring).
- **Early Years block** outturn is £240k higher than funding driven by a last Easter date (20th April 2025); this will offset in 2025/26 funding.
- **High needs block outturn** is £13.7 million higher than funding with the main drivers being £6 million independent schools, £1.9 million top ups, £0.5 million SEN protection scheme, £6 million budget deficit built into 2024/25 budget (Schools Forum advised of this in Jan24).

High Needs block 2024/25 summary

DSG Allocation	DfE funding (inc Black) £'000	DfE Outturn (inc Black) £'000	Variance £'000	Variance %
High Needs Block				
Special School Places - LA Schools only	1,810	1,650	(160)	-9%
Widmarsh Explorers - full year	208	208	0	0%
Autism Bases	429	220	(209)	-49%
Hampton Dene & Bishops Resource Base	728	336	(392)	-54%
Early Years SENDIF Grants	270	250	(20)	-7%
Nurture Groups	227	268	41	18%
Independent Special Schools	6,800	10,395	3,595	53%
Alternative Provision	0	1,352	1,352	0%
EOTAS	0	447	447	0%
Therapy	0	180	180	0%
Tariff	0	304	304	0%
Post 16 Top-up Funding	2,700	3,280	580	21%
Complex Needs Funding	2,680	2,544	(136)	-5%
Pupil Referral incl H3 Home, Hospital and	1,053	1,123	70	7%
PRU Protected Funding	53	53	0	0%
PRU Top-ups	500	436	(64)	-13%
SEN Support Services incl 4.2% pay infl	1,460	1,328	(132)	-9%
Mainstream Schools Top-up	4,515	5,638	1,123	25%
Special School Top-up	4,384	5,162	778	18%
Managed Moves	5	0	(5)	-100%
Teachers' Pension Grant	409	409	0	0%
New Autism Bases (From September 2024)	625	277	(348)	-56%
Charges and Income Recoupment	(383)	164	547	-143%
SEN Protection Scheme	1,150	1,564	414	36%
SEN Protection Scheme Block Tfr	0	0	0	0%
Central Block transfer	77	0	(77)	-100%
Budget Deficit reported to Schools For	(5,786)	0	5,786	-100%
Net Expenditure	23,914	37,586	13,672	57%

SEN Protection scheme

- Due to affordability issues in both the schools block and high needs block compromises are going to have to be made.
- SEN Protection has lost it's original purpose of rewarding only the most inclusive schools.
- Jan/Mar25 – Schools Forum have voted for a block transfer from schools block to high needs block to fund the SEN Protection scheme, therefore SEN Protection scheme will continue for 2025/26.
- **Budget Working Group were asked to consider that SEN Protection Scheme would be discontinued from 2026/27 onwards. Budget Working Group asked for a more phased approach and for further modelling to be completed on this.**

DSG deficit

£000	Budget 25/26
Special School Places - LA	1,750
Widemarsh Explorers	192
Autism bases	326
Resource bases + SEMH	600
SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) EY (includes EY £150k block transfer)	270
Nurture Groups	291
Independent Schools	20,626
Post 16 top up funding	2,808
Complex needs	2,558
PRU HPRS	1,154
PRU H3	337
PRU Protection (split sites/TLR)	54
Top ups	11,233
SEN Protection (includes HNB transfer)	1,544
Managed moves	
Teachers Pension Grant	444
SEN Support services	1,471
Inter Authority Recoupment income	-
	<hr/> 45,658
Deficit adjustment	(20,176)
TOTAL Funding/Forecast	<hr/> 25,482 <hr/>

- The table on the left hand side shows budget 2025/26 for the high needs block where we have an in-year deficit of £20.2 million driven by independent school places, tops ups and resource/autism/SEMH placements.
- Adding this to the brought forward £20 million deficit at 1st April 2025 would mean a **cumulative deficit position as at 31st March 2026 of £40.2 million.**
- We have to look at expenditure to reduce our deficit position.

Phased approach to end SEN Protection scheme (2026/27 onwards)

£1.5M SEN Protection budget in High Needs Block
(using 2025/26 data as an example)

No Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer - £690k (2025/26) retained in Schools Block. 2026/27 only – **will be relooked at 2027/28 onwards**

High Needs block deficit offset £250k

Remaining for DSG Deficit Management Strategies - £560k

Phased approach to end SEN Protection scheme (2026/27 onwards) – notes:

- No Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer in 2026/27 – **£690k** (2025/26 value) retained in Schools Block. Possible uses: 2026/27 funding formula allocations can be increased to all schools by increasing factors, Minimum Funding Guarantee adjustment, or growth fund could be set up to manage rising and falling rolls in school. **This is a compromise for 2026/27 and the block transfer process will be reviewed at budget 2027/28.**
- **£250k** used to mitigate high needs block deficit
- Strategies within the DSG deficit management plan include the expansion of the SEMH inclusion team to include more specialist staff to support directly in schools a wider range of needs, and increase in commissioned short and long stay intervention spaces for pupils with SEMH as a primary need, to cover all age ranges. Costs for these strategies equate to **£560k.**

Budget Working
Group – Deficit
Management Plan

Context

The purpose of the management plan as per the DfE guidance is to:

- Comply with DSG conditions of grant.
- Monitor how DSG High Needs funding is being spent and compare data on high needs spend with other Local Authorities.
- Highlight areas where the Local Authority will review spending to improve future strategic plans for the provision of children and young people with special education needs and disabilities.
- Reduce the in-year cumulative DSG overspend before the government ends the Statutory Override (Accounting Treatment to ring fence the deficit from general fund reserves) for the Dedicated Schools Grant.
- To provide assurances that the Local Authority is achieving value for money from their DSG spend and are fully cognisant of and capture all the potential operational and financial risks.
- Maintain engagement with stakeholders through strong and collaborative governance arrangements with School Leaders and Schools Forum.

The DfE uses a special template that contains comparative data on special provision and placements, Section 251 budget and outturn data and High Needs National Funding Formula illustrative allocations. The information held on our template underpins this strategic plan and can be treated as an appendix. This document together with the appendix is reviewed by the Service, finance team and DfE in regular meetings.

Local Context

- June 2025: In line with national trends, Herefordshire is feeling acute pressure on their High Needs Budget.
- Despite increases in specialist provision being commissioned over the past few years (30 places in new mainstream autism bases and 77 newly commissioned places in maintained special schools and academies), more children and young people are being placed in the independent and non-maintained special schools at high cost.
- There are 112 pupils with EHCPs in the independent sector, a growth of 50 places since 2020.
- Total costs have risen from £427k in 2017/18 to £5.1 million at the end of the financial year 2023/24.
- Relevant headline data taken from the Herefordshire SEND School Place Commissioning Plan 2024 to 2027, shows the increased demand and the scale of the challenge is as follows:
 - Herefordshire is responsible for maintaining 1461 EHC plans (January 2024), which is forecast to rise to 1939 by 2027
 - 31% of EHCPs have SEMH as the primary need (compared to 15% nationally)
 - 23% of EHCPs have ASD as the primary need (compared to 32% nationally)
 - The growth in the number of children under 5yrs with an EHCP has been marked – an increase of 45% since 2020
 - Similarly, there has been growth in the numbers of young people post-16 with an EHCP – an increase of 35% since 2020
 - Trend lines suggest a 10% growth in EHCPs each year
 - 5% of children and young people with EHCPs are educated 'elsewhere' (e.g. elective home tuition, education otherwise than at school) compared with 3.5% nationally.

DSG Deficit Management Plan

The key actions in this Management Plan are grouped into four workstreams:

1. Intervention First
2. Managing demand
3. Increasing the sufficiency of local places
4. Financial management adjustments

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- These workstreams are also replicated in the SEND Action Plan and reported into broader governance via the SEND Action Plan's leadership workstream.
- Regular updates will be presented to Budget Working Group and Schools Forum.

1. Intervention First

1. A commissioning review is driving new ways of working to support children and families, to ensure that mediation and alternative provision are purchase through a framework. This will drive efficiencies, for example reducing spot purchasing costs.
2. Intervention pathway (Harvest Project) from Hereford Pupil Referral Service offered which will be time limited and with a school contribution made toward the cost of intervention.
3. Short-term and long-term commissioned places to support pupils with SEMH (High Needs). KS1 = 12 places short-term and 6 long-term. KS2 = 16 short-term and 6 long-term.
4. Increase the reach of SENCO forum network to share good practice, promote support for children and young people within the mainstream schools and timely identification of need.
5. Develop the SEND Outreach and Inclusion offer with Special Schools, Specialist Teachers and Education Psychology services, Education Inclusion Advisors, and mainstream resource bases to set up support offer for staff in mainstream schools and reduce the need for specialist placements.
6. Training to improve the capacity of schools to meet pupils' needs at an earlier stage. This includes PINS training, classroom teacher 'expert' training, SENCo support and training.

1. Intervention First

7. Quality Assurance cycle of the delivery of Section F of an EHC plan in schools and settings, to support professionals in delivering high quality support.
8. Develop graduated approach toolkits to support practitioners in all key stages and for all types of primary need.
9. Developing stronger transition pathways – supporting schools to receive pupils who have a variety of needs into the start of a new key stage.

2. Managing Demand

1. Implement and develop the new graduated approach toolkit, supporting early identification and intervention strategies to improve outcomes for children and young people and reduce the likelihood that a child or young person will require a specialist placement as they grow older.
2. Review of commissioning of places in the Pupil Referral Service.
3. Review of commissioning of places in Educated Other than at School Arrangements. An analysis by age, gender reason for EOTAS provision, length of time out of school and numbers awaiting placement or in receipt of bespoke packages (and the cost of those packages) should be included.
4. Market testing exercise of commissioned services will be used to identify efficiencies, for example more cost-effective home tuition services.
5. A new delivery model for HPRS: Establish an Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce. Taskforces are teams of co-located specialists based onsite within schools, undertaking integrated, child-centred work with pupils, responsively information-sharing, as well as sharing their expertise and embedding their practice within the whole school. Additionally, create a space for a small locality team (early help / social care) to be located in the school with an office and meeting room.

2. Managing Demand

6. Alternative Provision and Support for Inclusion - Continue to support schools to be inclusive and manage increase in permanent exclusions. A new delivery model for HPRS: The proposed model will provide an outreach element with the intention of enabling children to remain in their local school where this is appropriate.

7. Establish a whole 'specialist teacher' team (4 staff) covering the 4 areas of need. Team of practitioners who support and aid set up of school run provisions (SEND hubs). Team model the running of it, then step away leaving the school with the skills and confidence to run it successfully internally. This team provide workshops promoting the benefits. School then to receive hands on support to set up the provision and the team would run the provision (for a set period of time) alongside school staff ensuring everything was in place before they step away, providing regular drop ins and support.

3. Improving sufficiency of local places

1. Extend specialist places for primary for SLCN and ASD: Expansion of Hampton Dene LCC to provide 16 additional spaces for KS1 and KS 2 for SLCN and ASD
2. Extend SEMH places: Expansion of Brookfield SEMH Special School to provide two additional classrooms and sports hall. Business case to keep Arrow Group at Symonds Street, will create additional capacity 16 places.
3. Rebuilding and Expansion of Westfield Special School to provide new accommodation for pupils (Capacity 73-100 to be finalised)
4. Develop MLD specialist provision: Ryfield Centre – up to 40 places for 5-16 yrs MLD and associated difficulties e.g. SEMH/ASD
5. Relocation and expansion of Hereford Pupil Referral Service: Develop Tier 2 model - short-term placements in alternative provision to assess support pupil's needs to help them return and remain their mainstream school). HPRS offer a total of 64 places across two centres, 24 KS3 and 40 KS4. New site to provide 100 KS3/4 places, an additional 36 new places. Expand age range of HPRS to include KS1/2. Vacating of St Davids site to create a small KS1 and KS2 registered alternative provision.

3. Improving sufficiency of local places

7. Extend the AP pathway to pupils and reduce the number of bespoke packages in place at a cost of £9360 per week. Develop a site for an outstanding provider e.g. Continu+ to deliver a richer AP offer.
8. Extend provision to include complex autism and SLD places: Free School Build – 80-place all-through special school for complex autism and severe learning difficulties.
9. Extend autism provision: Resource Based Provision – autism base Aylestone. Increase 16 places KS3/4 for ASD (24 in total)
10. Extend SEMH provision: Resource Based Provision – SEMH base, Trinity Primary School, 8 places September 25 KS1/2, 16 places KS1/2 Sept 26 (16 in total)
11. Extend SEMH provision: Construct a new SEMH Special School KS1-5, 140 places

4. Financial management workstream

4.1. Deep dive into each area of spend to identify efficiencies

4.2 Review administrative charges to other local authorities for out of county pupils in Herefordshire

4.3 Review of commissioning arrangements that would achieve projected cost avoidance

4.4 Launch a new strategic commissioning framework for Alternative Provision in September 2025

4.5 Post 16 – FE College Placements - Review post 16 expenditure to ensure greater efficiency with mainstream college providers.

4.6 Carry out an annual demand profile in July/August each year to analyse the current provision deficit and to track the actual position against the projected position.



Title of report: Annual Review of Schools Forum Membership and Constitution

Meeting: Herefordshire Schools Forum

Meeting date: Friday 11 July 2025

Report by: Democratic Services Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To report on the annual review of membership of Herefordshire Schools Forum (the forum) and Budget Working Group (the working group) and to approve action as necessary to maintain proportionality and to recommend the adoption of the amended constitution.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The outcome of the annual review of proportionality is noted with the following consequential changes.**
- b) **1 seat be transferred from Maintained Primary Schools to Academies to ensure proportionality on the forum,**
- c) **1 seat be transferred from Maintained Primary Schools to Academies to ensure proportionality on the Working Group,**
- d) **the revised constitution as set out at appendix 1 to the report, be recommended to the Corporate Director, Children and Young People, subject to any amendments the schools forum wishes to make.**

Alternative options

1. The forum could choose to disregard proportionality in respect of the forum and the working group. This option is not recommended as it is preferable for the effective functioning of the working group

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Jen Preece, email: jennypreece@herefordshire.gov.uk

that the different types of schools in Herefordshire are fairly represented and the forum has previously determined that the working group should be broadly proportionate.

2. The Schools forum could retain its current constitution unchanged. This is not recommended as the constitution is not reflective of current practice and would benefit from additional clarity.

Key considerations

Review of the Schools Forum Constitution

3. The constitution of the Herefordshire Schools Forum as adopted in July 2017 has been reviewed to confirm that it remains compliant with legislation and guidance and to identify any areas for improvement, particularly regarding arrangements for remote participation at meetings.
4. The constitution has also been reviewed against current standard practices for the operation of council committees. Although the Schools forum is not a committee of the council it is common for councils to run the forum along similar lines, and this is recognised in guidance as a legitimate approach.
5. The review concluded that the constitution complied with all current legislation. However, the review did identify some points where the constitution could be strengthened to clarify arrangements for the operation of the forum, taking on board the good practice highlighted in guidance produced by the Education Funding Agency.
6. Summary of proposed changes to constitution

Functions of the Forum

Appendix A has been introduced which clearly sets out the powers and responsibilities of the Schools forum.

Membership

The number of seats allocated to each category of members were removed and included at Appendix B in order for a technical change to be made to the constitution each time the annual review of proportionality was conducted and required a change.

Tenure of Office

Following the review and consultation with members, the term of office for members would be adjusted to a four-year term.

Other changes

All other changes are typographical corrections, simplification or to ensure compliance with the council's style guide.

Membership of Schools Forum

7. The composition of the forum is reviewed annually to ensure that Local Authority maintained schools and academies are represented proportionately on the forum, based on the number of pupils registered in each category of school, and that the membership complies with regulations.
8. In July 2024 the Herefordshire Schools forum agreed to remove a seat for Maintained Primary Schools taking the composition of members of the forum down to 25. This was due to the number of vacancies and lack of appetite to fill the spaces.
9. Pending the review of the forum's constitution (adopted 2017) and the number of vacancies unfilled it is recommended that the elections for forum members for September 2024 be postponed until September 2025 with standing members retaining their current term of office.

10. Forum members had been consulted with regards to making changes to the constitution, with alternate options for the term of office for members and the Chair and Vice Chair roles.
11. Herefordshire Schools forum is composed of 25 seats allocated between schools' members, academies members and non-school members. Schools and academies members together must number at least two-thirds of the total membership of the Schools forum and the balance between maintained primary, maintained secondary and academies members must be broadly proportionate to the pupil numbers in each category. The membership of the forum is reviewed annually to ensure the allocation of seats remains proportionate.
12. Herefordshire allocates 18 seats between the schools and academies members. One seat each is allocated to mainstream special schools, academy special schools and the Pupil Referral Unit management committee. The 15 remaining seats are allocated to mainstream schools and academies, divided proportionally. The annual review has been carried out for 2025, and the results are set out below.
13. Regulations make no distinction between primary phase and secondary phase academies. Guidance states that Free Schools are to be classed as academies for the purpose of this exercise. The calculations of proportionality set out below are based on pupil numbers taken from the January 2025 school census and translate these proportions into numbers of seats on the forum, rounded as necessary.
14. Total pupil population in mainstream schools was 22,259 broken down as follows:

School category	Number of pupils	Proportion	Proposed number of seats (rounded)	Current number of seats
Maintained Primary	7,539	33.9%	5.08 (5)	6
Maintained Secondary	3,341	15.0%	2.25 (2)	2
Academies	11,379	51.1%	7.67 (8)	7
Total			15	15

15. Based on this assessment, it is proposed that a seat is transferred from the allocation of seats for Maintained Primary Schools to Academies to ensure representation is proportionate on the Schools Forum.

Membership of Budget Working Group

16. The Budget Working Group is a permanent advisory sub-group of the forum. Regulations prescribe how the forum itself is to be constituted but these provisions do not apply to the composition of sub-groups. The composition of the Budget Working Group is therefore a matter for the forum itself. It is open to the forum to agree to disregard proportionality for the working group, amend the number of seats or set minimum representation for particular groups.
17. The forum agreed in October 2012 that the Budget Working Group would consist of 14 members. Two seats were allocated to early year's settings and one to special schools. The remaining 11 places available to primary schools, secondary schools and academies, were to be allocated on a broadly proportionate basis based on pupil numbers in each category. The forum also agreed that there should be a minimum of one maintained school representative from the secondary sector and one academy representative from the primary school sector.

18. Total pupil population in mainstream schools was 22,493 broken down as follows:

School category	Number of pupils	Proportion	Proposed number of seats (rounded)	Current number of seats
Maintained Primary	7539	33.9%	3.73 (4)	5
Maintained Secondary	3341	15.0%	1.65 (1)	1
Academies	11,379	51.1%	5.62 (6)	5
Total			11	11

19. Based on this assessment, it is proposed that a seat be removed from Maintained Primary's and added to Academies to ensure representation is proportionate on the Budget Working Group.

Community impact

20. The items considered and decisions made by the forum should have regard to what matters to schools and settings in Herefordshire and how the forum can best contribute to managing the current changing and challenging financial circumstances.
21. The constitution ensures that the membership of the Schools forum continues to reflect the range of types of school and setting across Herefordshire and that all groups have the opportunity to shape the decisions of the forum.
22. The amendments to the constitution as a result of the new regulations ensure that the work of the forum can continue and that all interested parties are able to observe the meetings of the forum.

Environmental Impact

23. Whilst this review will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the council's Environmental Policy.

Equality duty

24. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
25. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this project/decision/activity, and it has been found to have low impact for equality.

Resource implications

26. A budget of £20k has been allocated for administering the Schools forum and associated activities for the 2025/26 financial year. This is funded from the dedicated schools grant received from central government.

Legal implications

27. The Schools forum is established under section 47A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The current regulations pertaining to the operation and management of Schools forums are set out in The Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012.
28. The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) sets out guidance on the operation of Schools forums, with the most recent version published in March 2021. This document also gives examples of good practice which the ESFA have drawn from a number of schools forums and the Department for Education. It is not designed to be prescriptive except where it refers directly to the Schools Forum Regulations 2012.
29. The council must ensure that the schools forum for their area is constituted in accordance with the regulations and is responsible for determining the size and composition of the forum, and the members' terms of office.

Risk management

30. There are no identified risks associated with approval of the recommendations contained in this report. If the membership of the forum and working group is not proportional, there is a risk some categories of schools could feel that they are not fairly represented and object to decisions taken by the forum.

Consultees

31. The draft revised constitution and appendices were circulated to all members of the forum on 3 June 2025 for comments. Views received were mixed with the proposed change to align the chair and vice chair terms of office. Some were content that it was sensible to have the roles align with the members term of office, but some concerns were raised with the greater weight of responsibility and onus that fell upon the roles and felt the two-year term should remain. Feedback indicated that the forum would be open to extending the term of office to four years, as they had assurance they could resign at any point.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Updated Herefordshire Schools Forum constitution

Appendix 2 - Herefordshire Schools Forum constitution with tracked changes

Background papers

None



HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

Date Last Updated: May 2025

Document location: Schools Forum webpage: [Link](#)

Contact: Jen Preece - Clerk to the Schools Forum

email: jennypreece@herefordshire.gov.uk

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Appendix A Powers and Functions

Appendix B Election and Appointment Arrangements

**Appendix C Current Terms of Reference and Membership
of the Budget Working Group**

HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

1. Introduction

The Herefordshire schools forum has been set up under the requirements of Section 47A of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. The operation of the Forum must comply with the requirements of the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012

1.1 The Forum must meet at least four times a year. All Forum meetings must be held in public, this includes a meeting of the Schools Forum that the public can access through remote means.

1.2 The Forum is not a committee of the council and therefore sits outside the legislation relating to council committees.

2 Functions of the Forum

The schools forum has its core functions defined to it by the Regulations and Department for Education guidance. Its main two functions are:

1. Consultation on changes to the national funding formula
2. Decision making on spending allocations of funding allocated from blocks.

The functions of the Forum and the local authority are described at Appendix A

3. Membership

The Herefordshire Schools Forum will have 25 members elected or appointed; the number of seats allocated to each category can be found in Appendix B and consists of:

Schools Members
Maintained primary schools' headteacher representatives
Local Authority maintained schools with a maintained nursery class representative
Maintained primary schools' governor representative
Maintained secondary schools' headteacher representative
Maintained secondary schools' governor representative
Local Authority maintained special schools' headteacher representative
Pupil Referral Units' (PRUs) management committee representative
Academies' representatives (headteacher/governor/schools business manager)
Academy Special School representative
Non Schools Members
Early Years representatives
16-19 provider representative
Diocesan/faith representatives
Trade Union representatives, 1 primary school and 1 secondary school

The composition of the forum will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that Local Authority maintained primary schools, Local Authority maintained secondary schools and

academies are broadly proportionately represented on the Forum, having regard to the proportion of Herefordshire pupils registered at them, and that the membership complies with regulations.

3.1 It is important to note that the Schools (Forum) (England) Regulations (2012) require that:

- The Schools Forum must comprise schools members, an academies member if there is at least one academy in the Local Authority area, and non-schools members.
- Schools and academies members together must comprise at least two thirds of the total membership of the Forum.
- At least one member must be a representative of the governing bodies of maintained schools, and at least one member must be a representative of the headteachers of maintained schools.

A list of the membership of the forum will be published on the Herefordshire Council website.

4. Election and Nomination Arrangements

A breakdown of the electing bodies for each sub-group can be found in Appendix B.

Electing or appointing bodies must provide the clerk to the schools forum with details of the method of election or appointment of members to the forum for that sub-group and a point of contact to which notification of vacancies can be made.

Electing bodies are responsible for ensuring that nomination and election of members takes place in a fair and transparent way. Electing bodies must ensure that all those eligible to vote on membership have the opportunity to do so, even if they are not members of the organisation administering the election.

It is not appropriate for a single person to be elected to represent more than one group or sub-group concurrently, for instance, if they were a governor at a primary and secondary school. They can stand for election from either group but can be appointed to represent only one of those groups.

The clerk to the forum will notify the agreed electing or appointing body of a vacancy and the date by which a new member must be notified to the clerk. The deadline will be not less than six weeks from the date of notification, taking account of school term dates.

If the electing or appointing body is unable to name a new member by the date specified, the Local Authority will appoint a member to that vacancy.

5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The chair and vice-chair must be elected from the forum's own members. The chair and vice-chair will hold these positions for a maximum of two years. The chair and vice-chair should represent different sectors of the school community.

When the chair and vice-chair are not present, the meeting can elect a chair for that meeting only.

6. Substitutes

Each electing or appointing body will be invited to designate one or more substitutes. In the event that a member is unable to attend a meeting they may request a substitute to attend on their behalf. Substitutes should be notified to the clerk to the forum prior to the start of the meeting. Designated substitutes will have the same voting rights as the member they are representing.

7. Tenure of Office

Each member will have a four-year term of office. *There are no restrictions on the number of terms a member can serve.* . In the event that a member of the forum ceases to hold the office, the term of office ceases, and another appointment must be made. The replacement will serve the remainder of the term.

A Forum member remains in office until:

- the member's term of office expires.
- the member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum;
- the member resigns from the forum by giving notice in writing to the authority;
- in the case of a non-schools member, the member is replaced by the authority, at the request of the body which the member represents, by another person nominated by that body

whichever comes first

8 Quorum

The Forum shall be quorate if at least 40% of the total membership is present at the meeting.

This includes members being present through remote means, such as through telephone conferencing, and video conferencing.

To be considered present at the meeting through remote means, a member must be able to:

- hear and be heard by, and where practicable, see and be seen by any members present;
- be heard and, where practicable, seen by any members of the public at the meeting.

If a meeting is inquorate, or becomes inquorate after the start of the meeting, it can proceed but cannot legally take decisions. An inquorate meeting can respond to local authority consultation and give views to the local authority. The local authority may choose to take account of views from an inquorate meeting but is not legally obliged to do so.

9. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Forum must declare an interest on any agenda item where the outcome may give them or their establishment a direct pecuniary advantage or avoid a disadvantage.

In considering the declaration of an interest, a member of the forum should apply the following test: would a member of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, reasonably think that the member might be influenced by the interest?

10. Managing the Business

The operational timescales and procedures described in the sections below are required to ensure that schools forum operates efficiently and has sufficient information and time to consider the issues.

11. Frequency of Meetings

These are determined by the schools forum. The forum should meet at least four times a year. Dates should be set annually for the forthcoming year.

12. Administration of the Forum

A forward plan must be established and reviewed by the forum on an annual basis, usually in July of each year.

Herefordshire Council Democratic Services will provide the resource to facilitate the forum, including organising and sending out agendas, papers, minutes and action sheets.

Papers for meetings of school's forum must be circulated five clear working days before the date of the meeting. Reports must be signed off by relevant officers prior to circulation.

Briefing meetings for the chair should take place at least three working days before each schools forum meeting.

Minutes from each schools forum meeting must be circulated within ten clear working days of the meeting as draft, and the minutes will be formally considered and confirmed at the following schools forum meeting.

13 Location of Meetings

Schools forums can meet remotely. This includes (but is not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast and interactive streaming.

As set out in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021 which amended The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to make permanent provisions to enable schools forums meetings to be held remotely.

14. Decision Making

The role of the Schools Forum is primarily a consultative body, however there are instances where decisions and voting will need to take place.

Any matter that requires a decision will be decided by a simple majority of those members present at the meeting and have voting rights, save that voting on:

- The funding formula is limited to schools members, academies members and PVI representatives.
- De-delegation is limited to the specific primary and secondary phase of schools members.
- Retaining funding for statutory duties relating to maintained schools only is limited to maintained primary, secondary, special and PRU members.

14.1 Methods of Voting

In events where voting is needed the Clerk will conduct a vote by one of the following methods:

- Electronic poll
- Show of hands
- Verbal agreement if total consensus
-

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote.

In the event of an urgent decision being required an email will be sent to all schools forum members fully explaining the issue on which a decision is required. Forum members will be required to submit their response via email to the date required. No decision will formally be made until a quorate number of responses has been received. This process will be administered by Democratic Services.

15. Working Groups

Herefordshire Children's Services Directorate and schools should try to make use of existing working groups wherever possible, to minimise duplication and use existing expertise. In order to support and advise the work of the schools forum existing working groups can be approached to provide information on related activities. The forum can also, if required, set up working groups for specific tasks. Such groups could be time-limited and would need to establish clear remits, appropriate membership and operating principles.

The full schools forum remains the decision making body. Working groups and other groups will provide information, advice and options.

Budget Working Group

The Budget Working Group is a permanent advisory sub-group of the full Schools Forum. It provides additional support and time to consider information and data in order to inform the development of key budgetary options, recommendations and decisions relating to Dedicated Schools Grant.

The terms of reference and membership of the Budget Working Group is attached to this constitution as Appendix C.

16. Confidential Reports

Meetings of the forum will be open to the public and press unless it is considered that an item of business should be considered in private session based on the application of the principles of the Local Government 1972 (as amended) that apply to local authority committees.

17. Public Participation

Any participation will be at the chair's discretion.



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Schools forum powers and responsibilities

A summary of the powers and responsibilities of schools forums.

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Formula change (including redistributions)	Proposes and decides	Must be consulted [voting restrictions apply - see schools forum structure document] and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	Checks for compliance with regulations
Movement of up to 0.5% from the schools block to other blocks	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Contracts (where the LA is entering a contract to be funded from the schools budget)	Proposes at least one month prior to invitation to tender, the terms of any proposed contract	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Financial issues relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding • arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding • arrangements for early years provision • administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants 	Consults annually	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None
Minimum funding guarantee (MFG)	Proposes any exclusions from MFG for application to DfE	Gives a view	Approval to application for exclusions

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
De-delegation for mainstream maintained schools for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contingencies administration of free school meals insurance licences/subscriptions staff costs – supply cover support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups behaviour support services library and museum services School improvement 	Proposes	Maintained primary and secondary school member representatives will decide for their phase. Middle schools are treated according to their deemed status	Will adjudicate where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
General Duties for maintained schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools (please see operational guide for more information) 	Proposes	Would be decided by the relevant maintained school members (primary, secondary, special and PRU).	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on and the criteria for allocating funding from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy 	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years 			
Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> early years block provision funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement back-pay for equal pay claims remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils admissions servicing of schools forum Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools 	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capital expenditure funded from revenue – projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013 so no new projects can be charged contribution to combined budgets – this is where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a 	Proposes up to the value committed in the previous financial year and where expenditure has already been committed.	Decides for each line	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
<p>contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing termination of employment costs (costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013 so no new redundancy costs can be charged) prudential borrowing costs – the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013 	Read establishing local authority DSG baselines for more information.		
<p>Central spend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> high needs block provision central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State 	Decides	None, but good practice to inform forum	None
Scheme of financial management changes	Proposes and consults the governing body and Head of every school	Approves (schools members only)	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Membership: length of office of members	Decides	None (but good practice would suggest that they gave a view)	None
Voting procedures	None	Determine voting procedures	None

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Chair of schools forum	Facilitates	Elects (may not be an elected member of the Council or officer)	None

Herefordshire Schools Forum**Election and Appointment Arrangements**

- 1 The tables below set out the agreed electing or appointing body for each sub-group and the number of seats available on the forum.
- 2 Electing or appointing bodies must provide the clerk to the schools forum with details of the method of election or appointment of members to the forum for that sub-group and a point of contact to which notification of vacancies can be made. Details should be sent to GovernanceSupportTeam@herefordshire.gov.uk.
- 3 Electing bodies are responsible for ensuring that nomination and election of members takes place in a fair and transparent way and for providing evidence of this if requested to do so. Electing bodies must ensure that all those eligible to vote on membership have the opportunity to do so, even if they are not members of the organisation administering the election.

Schools Members

Sub-Group	Electing / Appointing Body	Number of seats
LA maintained primary school's head teacher representatives	Primary heads (LA maintained schools only)	3
LA maintained school with a maintained nursery class representative	Primary heads (LA maintained schools only)	1
LA maintained primary schools' governor representative	HGA	1
LA maintained secondary schools' governor representative	HGA	1
LA maintained secondary schools' head teacher representative	HASH (LA maintained schools only)	1
LA maintained special schools' head teacher representative	Special school heads (LA maintained only)	1
Pupil Referral Unit management committee representative	Management Committee for the Pupil Referral Service	1
Mainstream academies	Mainstream academy proprietors in Herefordshire	8
Academy special school Representative	Special academy proprietors in Herefordshire	1

Non-Schools Members

Sub-Group	Electing / Appointing Body	Number of seats
Early years representatives	Appointed by Local Authority	2
16-19 provider representative	16-19 providers (Arranged by Local Authority)	1
Diocesan / faith representatives	One each appointed by Diocesan Board of Education and Catholic Archdiocese	2
Trade Union representatives 1 primary and 1 secondary remit	Appointed by Local Authority	2

Appendix C**Current Terms of Reference and Membership of the Budget Working Group**

This group is established as a permanent advisory sub-group of the full Schools Forum. Importantly it reports to Schools Forum (SF), and is not itself a decision-making body.

Remit:

To provide additional support and time to consider information and data in order to inform the development of key budgetary options, recommendations and decisions relating to Dedicated Schools Grant.

Membership:

As appointed by HASH, Primary Head Teachers, Early Years Forum and Local Authority.

Operating principles:

To assess financial information prior to presentation to Schools Forum

To consider implications of any financial proposal

To draft papers for submission to full Schools Forum meetings

To provide considered information and advice to support the work of the full Schools Forum.



HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

Date Last Updated: May 2025

Document location: Schools Forum webpage: Link

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HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM MEMBERSHIP AND CONSTITUTION

1. Introduction

The [Herefordshire schools forum](#) ~~has been set up under the requirements of Section 47A of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998. The operation of the Forum must comply with the requirements of the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012~~ ~~is established by virtue of S47A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (as amended by the Education Act 2002) and Regulations.~~

[1.1 The Forum must meet at least four times a year. All Forum meetings must be held in public, this includes a meeting of the Schools Forum that the public can access through remote means.](#)

[1.2 The Forum is not a committee of the council and therefore sits outside the legislation relating to council committees.](#)

2. Function

~~The schools forum will have several main functions as listed below, but may also consult on other items that the Local Authority deems appropriate. Details are defined in Regulations and Department for Education guidance.~~

2 Functions of the Forum

[The schools forum has its core functions defined to it by the Regulations and Department for Education guidance. Its main two functions are:](#)

- [1. Consultation on changes to the national funding formula](#)
- [2. Decision making on spending allocations of funding allocated from blocks.](#)

[The functions of the Forum and the local authority are described at Appendix A](#)

35. Membership

~~The Herefordshire Schools Forum will have 256 members~~ [elected or appointed; the number of seats allocated to each category as follows:](#) ~~can be found in Appendix B and consists of:~~

Schools Members
Maintained primary schools' headteacher representatives
Local Authority maintained schools with a maintained nursery class representative
Maintained primary schools' governor representative
Maintained secondary schools' headteacher representative
Maintained secondary schools' governor representative
Local Authority maintained special schools' headteacher representative
Pupil Referral Units' (PRUs) management committee representative
Academies' representatives (headteacher/governor/schools business manager)

Academy Special School representative
Non Schools Members Early Years representatives 16-19 provider representative Diocesan/faith representatives Trade Union representatives, 1 primary school and 1 secondary school

The composition of the forum will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that Local Authority maintained primary schools, Local Authority maintained secondary schools and academies are broadly proportionately represented on the Forum, having regard to the proportion of Herefordshire pupils registered at them, and that the membership complies with regulations.

3.1 It is important to note that the Schools (Forum) (England) Regulations (2012) require that:

- The Schools Forum must comprise schools members, an academies member if there is at least one academy in the Local Authority area, and non-schools members.
- Schools and academies members together must comprise at least two thirds of the total membership of the Forum.
- At least one member must be a representative of the governing bodies of maintained schools, and at least one member must be a representative of the headteachers of maintained schools.

A list of the membership of the forum will be published on the Herefordshire Council website.

64. Election and Nomination Arrangements

A breakdown of the electing bodies for each sub-group can be found in Appendix B.

Electing or appointing bodies must provide the clerk to the schools forum with details of the method of election or appointment of members to the forum for that sub-group and a point of contact to which notification of vacancies can be made.

Electing bodies are responsible for ensuring that nomination and election of members takes place in a fair and transparent way. Electing bodies must ensure that all those eligible to vote on membership have the opportunity to do so, even if they are not members of the organisation administering the election.

It is not appropriate for a single person to be elected to represent more than one group or sub-group concurrently, for instance, if they were a governor at a primary and secondary school. They can stand for election from either group but can be appointed to represent only one of those groups.

~~Appendix A to this constitution sets out the agreed electing or appointing bodies for each sub-group and the process for electing or appointing members.~~

The clerk to the forum will notify the agreed electing or appointing body of a vacancy and the date by which a new member must be notified to the clerk. The deadline will be not less than six weeks from the date of notification, taking account of school term dates.

If the electing or appointing body is unable to name a new member by the date specified, the Local Authority will appoint a member to that vacancy.

5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The chair and vice-chair must be elected from the forum's own members. The chair and vice-chair will hold these positions for a maximum of two years. The chair and vice-chair should represent different sectors of the school community.

When the chair and vice-chair are not present, the meeting can elect a chair for that meeting only.

67. Substitutes

Each electing or appointing body will be invited to designate one or more substitutes. In the event that a member is unable to attend a meeting they may request a substitute to attend on their behalf. Substitutes should be notified to the clerk to the forum prior to the start of the meeting. Designated substitutes will have the same voting rights as the member they are representing.

78. Tenure of Office

Each member will have a ~~three~~^{four}-year term of office. ~~There are no restrictions on the number of terms a member can serve. - (unless they become chair or vice-chair).~~ In the event that a member of the forum ceases to hold the office, the term of office ceases, and another appointment must be made. The replacement will serve the remainder of the term.

A Forum member remains in office until:

- the member's term of office expires.
 - the member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum;
 - the member resigns from the forum by giving notice in writing to the authority;
 - in the case of a non-schools member, the member is replaced by the authority, at the request of the body which the member represents, by another person nominated by that body
- whichever comes first

89. Quorum

The Forum shall be quorate if at least 40% of the total membership is present at the meeting.

This includes members being present through remote means, such as through telephone conferencing, and video conferencing.

To be considered present at the meeting through remote means, a member must be able to:

- hear and be heard by, and where practicable, see and be seen by any members present;

- be heard and, where practicable, seen by any members of the public at the meeting.

~~The forum shall not be quorate if less than 40% of the total membership is present at the meeting. Members unable to attend should therefore arrange cover from nominated substitutes.~~

If a meeting is inquorate, or becomes inquorate after the start of the meeting, it can proceed but cannot legally take decisions. An inquorate meeting can respond to local authority consultation and give views to the local authority. The local authority may choose to take account of views from an inquorate meeting but is not legally obliged to do so.

944. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Forum must declare an interest on any agenda item where the outcome may give them or their establishment a direct pecuniary advantage or avoid a disadvantage.

~~There are many instances where a decision on an issue will have an effect on all schools, be it on a pro rata basis, and as such members would not declare an interest. It is recognised that all schools group members will have an interest in at least one school. It is important that members should declare if the item under discussion could make a material difference to that school, or where they may have a personal or pecuniary interest. Notwithstanding this, a member may continue contributing to the discussion, but should not take any part in any decision made concerning that particular proposal which uniquely affects one particular school, at which the member is, for example, an employee or where the employee's children attend or which changes funding for their particular school/schools.~~

In considering the declaration of an interest, a member of the forum should apply the following test: would a member of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, reasonably think that the member might be influenced by the interest?

102. Managing the Business

The operational timescales and procedures described in the sections below are required to ensure that schools forum operates efficiently and has sufficient information and time to consider the issues.

113. Frequency of Meetings

These are determined by the schools forum. The forum should meet at least four times a year. Dates should be set annually for the forthcoming year.

124. Administration of the Forum

A forward plan must be established and reviewed by the forum on an annual basis, usually in February/July of each year.

Herefordshire Council Democratic Services will provide the resource to facilitate the forum, including organising and sending out agendas, papers, minutes and action sheets.

Papers for meetings of school's forum must be circulated five clear working days before the date of the meeting. Reports must be signed off by relevant officers prior to circulation.

Briefing meetings for the chair should take place at least three working days before each schools forum meeting.

Minutes from each schools forum meeting must be circulated within ten clear working days of the meeting as draft, and the minutes will be formally considered and confirmed at the following schools forum meeting.

13 Location of Meetings

Schools forums can meet remotely. This includes (but is not limited to) telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webcast and interactive streaming.

As set out in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021 which amended The Schools Forums (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to make permanent provisions to enable schools forums meetings to be held remotely.

145. Decision Making

The role of the Schools Forum is primarily a consultative body, however there are instances where decisions and voting will need to take place.

Any matter that requires a decision will be decided by a simple majority of those members present at the meeting and have voting rights, save that voting on:

- The funding formula is limited to schools members, academies members and PVI representatives.
- De-delegation is limited to the specific primary and secondary phase of schools members.
- Retaining funding for statutory duties relating to maintained schools only is limited to maintained primary, secondary, special and PRU members.

14.1 Methods of Voting

In events where voting is needed the Clerk will conduct a vote by one of the following methods:

- Electronic poll
- Show of hands
- Verbal agreement if total consensus

If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chair will have a second or casting vote.

~~Schools forum is primarily a consultative body, with some decision-making responsibilities. The Local Authority will take the views of schools forum into account before finalising arrangements on which the forum has been consulted, at a directorate leadership team and lead member, cabinet and council level.~~

~~Recommendations to the council should normally be made through consensus. Majority voting should be used to decide any issues, with each representative casting one vote. The chair will have the casting vote in the event of a tie.~~

~~Voting on the funding formula is limited by Regulations to schools members and PVI representatives.~~

~~Voting on de-delegation is limited by Regulations to the specific primary and secondary phase of schools members.~~

In the event of an urgent decision being required an email will be sent to all schools forum members fully explaining the issue on which a decision is required. Forum members will be required to submit their response via email to the date required. No decision will formally be made until a quorate number of responses has been received. This process will be administered by Democratic Services.

156. Working Groups

Herefordshire Children's [Wellbeing Services](#) Directorate and schools should try to make use of existing working groups wherever possible, to minimise duplication and use existing expertise. In order to support and advise the work of the schools forum existing working groups can be approached to provide information on related activities. The forum can also, if required, set up working groups for specific tasks. Such groups could be time-limited and would need to establish clear remits, appropriate membership and operating principles.

The full schools forum remains the decision making body. Working groups and other groups will provide information, advice and options.

Budget Working Group

The Budget Working Group is a permanent advisory sub-group of the full Schools Forum. It provides additional support and time to consider information and data in order to inform the development of key budgetary options, recommendations and decisions relating to Dedicated Schools Grant.

The terms of reference and membership of the Budget Working Group is attached to this constitution as Appendix [CB](#).

167. Confidential Reports

Meetings of the forum will be open to the public and press unless it is considered that an item of business should be considered in private session based on the application of the principles of the Local Government 1972 (as amended) that apply to local authority committees.

178. Public Participation

Any participation will be at the chair's discretion.



Education & Skills
Funding Agency

Schools forum powers and responsibilities

A summary of the powers and responsibilities of schools forums.

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Formula change (including redistributions)	Proposes and decides	Must be consulted [voting restrictions apply - see schools forum structure document] and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	Checks for compliance with regulations
Movement of up to 0.5% from the schools block to other blocks	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Contracts (where the LA is entering a contract to be funded from the schools budget)	Proposes at least one month prior to invitation to tender, the terms of any proposed contract	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Financial issues relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding • arrangements for use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school, in particular the places to be commissioned by the LA and schools and the arrangements for paying top-up funding • arrangements for early years provision • administration arrangements for the allocation of central government grants 	Consults annually	Gives a view and informs the governing bodies of all consultations	None
Minimum funding guarantee (MFG)	Proposes any exclusions from MFG for application to DfE	Gives a view	Approval to application for exclusions

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
De-delegation for mainstream maintained schools for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contingencies administration of free school meals insurance licences/subscriptions staff costs – supply cover support for minority ethnic pupils/underachieving groups behaviour support services library and museum services School improvement 	Proposes	Maintained primary and secondary school member representatives will decide for their phase. Middle schools are treated according to their deemed status	Will adjudicate where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
General Duties for maintained schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for maintained schools (please see operational guide for more information) 	Proposes	Would be decided by the relevant maintained school members (primary, secondary, special and PRU).	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on and the criteria for allocating funding from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for significant pre-16 pupil growth, including new schools set up to meet basic need, whether maintained or academy 	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funding for good or outstanding schools with falling rolls where growth in pupil numbers is expected within three years 			
Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> early years block provision funding to enable all schools to meet the infant class size requirement back-pay for equal pay claims remission of boarding fees at maintained schools and academies places in independent schools for non-SEN pupils admissions servicing of schools forum Contribution to responsibilities that local authorities hold for all schools 	Proposes	Decides	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Central spend on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capital expenditure funded from revenue – projects must have been planned and decided on prior to April 2013 so no new projects can be charged contribution to combined budgets – this is where the schools forum agreed prior to April 2013 a 	Proposes up to the value committed in the previous financial year and where expenditure has already been committed.	Decides for each line	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
<p>contribution from the schools budget to services which would otherwise be funded from other sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing termination of employment costs (costs for specific individuals must have been approved prior to April 2013 so no new redundancy costs can be charged) prudential borrowing costs – the commitment must have been approved prior to April 2013 	<p>Read establishing local authority DSG baselines for more information.</p>		
<p>Central spend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> high needs block provision central licences negotiated by the Secretary of State 	Decides	None, but good practice to inform forum	None
Scheme of financial management changes	Proposes and consults the governing body and Head of every school	Approves (schools members only)	Adjudicates where schools forum does not agree LA proposal
Membership: length of office of members	Decides	None (but good practice would suggest that they gave a view)	None
Voting procedures	None	Determine voting procedures	None

Function	Local authority	Schools forum	DfE role
Chair of schools forum	Facilitates	Elects (may not be an elected member of the Council or officer)	None

Herefordshire Schools Forum

Election and Appointment Arrangements

- 1 The tables below set out the agreed electing or appointing body for each sub-group and the number of seats available on the forum.
- 2 Electing or appointing bodies must provide the clerk to the schools forum with details of the method of election or appointment of members to the forum for that sub-group and a point of contact to which notification of vacancies can be made. Details should be sent to GovernanceSupportTeam@herefordshire.gov.uk.
- 3 Electing bodies are responsible for ensuring that nomination and election of members takes place in a fair and transparent way and for providing evidence of this if requested to do so. Electing bodies must ensure that all those eligible to vote on membership have the opportunity to do so, even if they are not members of the organisation administering the election.

Schools Members

Sub-Group	Electing / Appointing Body	Number of seats
LA maintained primary school's head teacher representatives	Primary heads (LA maintained schools only)	35
LA maintained school with a maintained nursery class representative	Primary heads (LA maintained schools only)	1
LA maintained primary schools' governor representative	HGA	1
LA maintained secondary schools' governor representative	HGA	1
LA maintained secondary schools' head teacher representative	HASH (LA maintained schools only)	1
LA maintained special schools' head teacher representative	Special school heads (LA maintained only)	1
Pupil Referral Unit management committee representative	Management Committee for the Pupil Referral Service	1
Mainstream academies	Mainstream academy proprietors in Herefordshire	87
Academy special school Representative	Special academy proprietors in Herefordshire	1

Non-Schools Members

Sub-Group	Electing / Appointing Body	Number of seats
Early years representatives	Appointed by Local Authority	2
16-19 provider representative	16-19 providers (Arranged by Local Authority)	1
Diocesan / faith representatives	One each appointed by Diocesan Board of Education and Catholic Archdiocese	2
Trade Union representatives 1 primary and 1 secondary remit	Appointed by Local Authority	2

Appendix C**Current Terms of Reference and Membership of the Budget Working Group**

This group is established as a permanent advisory sub-group of the full Schools Forum. Importantly it reports to Schools Forum (SF), and is not itself a decision-making body.

Remit:

To provide additional support and time to consider information and data in order to inform the development of key budgetary options, recommendations and decisions relating to Dedicated Schools Grant.

Membership:

As appointed by HASH, Primary Head Teachers, Early Years Forum and Local Authority.

Operating principles:

To assess financial information prior to presentation to Schools Forum

To consider implications of any financial proposal

To draft papers for submission to full Schools Forum meetings

To provide considered information and advice to support the work of the full Schools Forum.

SCHOOLS FORUM WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

24 October 2025	
Appointments	To appoint a chairperson and vice-chairperson for the Forum. To appoint a chairperson for the Budget Working Group if required
Local and National Schools Funding Update	To seek the view of the forum on local and national school funding issues, including any recommendations of the budget working group.
Work programme 2025/26	To review the work programme and identify any additional items the forum wishes to consider.
23 January 2026	
Dedicated Schools Grant settlement	To receive a report on the DSG settlement and consider proposed schools budget 2025/26 (subject to DfE national formula).
Budget Working Group	To receive a report on the activities of the Budget Working Group not covered elsewhere on the agenda. (recurring item)
20 March 2026	
High needs budget proposals 2025/26	To consider proposals for the allocation of the high needs funding block for 2025/26 (subject to DfE national formula).
Budget Working Group	To receive a report on the activities of the Budget Working Group not covered elsewhere on the agenda. (recurring item)
10 July 2026	
Local and National Schools Funding Update	To receive any updates on funding arrangements.
Annual review of membership	To review the membership of the Schools Forum to ensure proportionality.
Dates of meetings and Work programme 2026/27	To approve dates for meetings and the work programme for the forum for 2026/27 academic year
Budget Working Group	To receive a report on the activities of the Budget Working Group not covered elsewhere on the agenda. (recurring item)

