



Meeting:	Schools Forum
Meeting date:	17 January 2020
Title of report:	Supplementary Report of the Budget Working Group
Report by:	Strategic Finance Manager

1. The report to the Schools Forum on the Schools Budget 2020/21 includes details of the final DSG settlement as published by government on 19 December 2019 and recommendations on allocations from the Local Authority. It does not include any comment from the Budget Working Group (BWG) referring only to the submission of this supplementary report from the Group.
2. The BWG met on 10 January 2020 and considered the proposals set out in the report to the forum. The working group supported the proposals that had previously been consulted upon (recommendations a, b and d-h in main report), including the proposed transfer from the schools block to the high needs block to support the SEN protection scheme for primary schools and extend the scheme to secondary schools.
3. There was extensive discussion of the proposal to transfer an additional £100k from the schools block to support the development of nurture provision across the county with the aim of reducing future demand for specialist social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) places (recommendation c in main report). This would match £100k earmarked in the draft high needs budget giving a total budget for the project of £200k. There was clear support for the principle of the project and a range of views on the best model of delivery. The working group requested that details of the proposed delivery model or models and allocation of funds be brought to a future meeting for further discussion.
4. The group considered the option to increase the amount transferred to support the nurture project which would have required reducing the additional funding to schools from the proposed £20 per pupil. While additional funding for SEN was considered desirable, other demands on school budgets were highlighted and the benefits of the additional funding to all schools were recognised. It was felt that the nurture project would need to run over at least two years to give sufficient time to evaluate its effectiveness and there was no certainty that higher levels of funding could be sustained in the next budget year. This option was therefore not supported but the group did recommend that the level of funding for the project be reviewed in 2021.
5. **The Budget Working Group supported the recommendations to the forum regarding the schools budget for 2020/21 as set out in the published report.**