



Meeting:	Schools Forum
Meeting date:	14 January 2022
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 2022/23 includes details of the final DSG settlement as published by government on 16 December 2021 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 7 January 2022 and considered the proposals set out in the report to the forum. The BWG was in general supportive of the budget proposals. In addition the working group considered a proposal (see appendix) from the chair of SACRE for an increase in funding for 2022/23. The BWG's observations are as follows;

Transfer to the High Needs Block

3. The BWG noted the proposals for the 22/23 schools budget and that there had been a very low response rate to the consultation. This may reflect general satisfaction with the proposals but the pressures of Covid may also have reduced the response rate. It was explained that the purpose of the SEN protection scheme is to balance out fluctuations in the numbers of pupils in individual schools with EHCPs and to provide additional funding for those schools with higher numbers of pupils in receipt of top-up funding so that such schools are not financially disadvantaged. The number of EHCPs were now double the number of Statements that had been in place, despite applying robust processes to challenge referrals from schools.
4. In relation to the transfer from the schools block to the high needs block, the group supported the recommendation for a transfer of £507,224 which would require reduction in spend of £88k, increasing the cap of what schools must spend to £160 x NOR.

De-delegation for the Behaviour Support Service

5. The proposal for de-delegation for the Behaviour Support Service came about due to a lack of trading income from schools due to covid and without further financial support from de-delegation and the high needs block the service would have to cease from September 2022. It was recognized there were difficulties in operating a trading service with a small number of staff and that increasing costs to schools could result in a fall in take up. These services were unlikely to be available outside of the local authority if the service ceased.
6. The group discussed the proposals and it was noted that:
 - A previous attempt to integrate the service with Pupil Referral Service had not been successful but could be reconsidered in the future when Pupil Referral Service was robust enough to manage this;
 - The service had only been back in house for 6 months before covid hit so it was hard to judge the level of demand;
 - The service could be better advertised;

- There was support for sustaining the service for 2022/23 with a review ahead of any decision for 2023/24.
- The imminent publication of the DfE's SEND review could potentially make proposals for high needs services and that it would be premature to make permanent changes to the service that may have to be reversed later.

Proposal for an increase in SACRE funding

7. The current SACRE budget proposals for the central block funding for 2022/23 already included an increase to £6k per annum for SACRE and that the small additional increase of £120 for core activities could be accommodated. The working group was supportive of this.
8. The BWG were advised that the central block budget for 2022/23 is already fully committed for 2022/23 and this includes a proposed transfer of £75k to the high needs block. If the SACRE proposals for a support programme for teachers and pupils were to be implemented this would reduce the amount that could be transferred to the high needs block and savings would need to be found to compensate for this. The group considered there were other options to support the proposed SACRE activities. Two secondary headteachers agreed to speak with the chairperson of SACRE about arranging events at their schools which could be used as exemplars of an alternative approach.

The Budget Working Group recommends:

- a. a transfer of £507,224 from the high needs block which would require reduction in spend of £88k, increasing the cap of what schools must spend to £160 x NOR.
- b. Option A in relation to the behavior support service, namely de-delegation at £4 per pupil for one year only pending a more detailed review.
- c. that the central block funding be recommended as per the published report with the small £120 additional increase to the SACRE funding for core activities only.

Proposed requirement for income to run Herefordshire SACRE 2022 / 2023

Request for finances to run an effective SACRE in Herefordshire

I submit this request in two sections.

1. The core requirements for the effective running of SACRE
2. To enhance the capability of SACRE members and to reinstate a program of support for teachers and pupils in Herefordshire.

(1) Core requirements for the running of SACRE

Requirement for contract with RE Today 2022 / 2023 & Syllabus	£5,000
For additional meeting in summer term 2022	£500
National SACRE (NASACRE) membership 2022	£120
National SACRE membership 2023	£120
SACRE training programme (dependent on NASACRE membership)	£500

(2) Support programme for Teachers and pupils**Pupil's conference**

Facilitators / organisers	£2,000
Expenses, including travel, refreshments and lunch for faith representatives	£250
Schools project	£1,000

SACRE is not just a legal requirement forced upon authorities because it is the law, it is about supporting our children and pupils in our county. It is about helping to educate them in the cultural differences of this diverse country.

We are one of the most diverse countries in the world. We are also one of the most liberal and it is incumbent upon us to develop our children's understanding of our diverse country within our diverse world. Our county, on the other hand, is not diverse and it is our duty to prepare our pupils for the increasingly diverse world that they will play their part in. Your SACRE can be a valuable resource for schools by helping to support and train teachers of RE. A resource of faith representatives, that can help our students develop an understanding of the various faiths and beliefs practiced in this country and around the world. It is a pupil's entitlement to be taught about cultural diversity. They are entitled to good RE delivery which includes an understanding of the cultural diversity of the people that they will meet in their lives. Religious education is not just about an understanding of our Gods. With an understanding of diverse faiths, how they pray and to what, coupled with an understanding of their history and geography, helps to cement relationships and prevent actions based on hatred and ignorance.

There are three things that we wish to see happen, involving our SACRE, over the coming three years. Training for SACRE members. An interaction day with primary pupils and an annual or biennial conference with senior students.

Beside our statutory directive of developing the RE syllabus every five years and compiling reports it is the role of an effective and supportive SACRE to:-

- Share ideas with teachers on how they can incorporate RE into any of their other classes, underpinning much of their teaching. Not in an evangelical way, but in a way that reinforces sound ethics.
- Encourage a platform for teachers of RE to share different ideas.
- Meet the children on many levels whether it be for prayers, for classroom workshops, or as qualified teachers of our subject.
- Visit schools and share our faiths with pupils.

- Hold conferences to impart the syllabus to teachers and give them ideas on content for exciting RE in their classrooms.

It is common for a proactive and effective SACRE to offer all this within their county.

When we look at what SACREs receive as funding from their councils, it ranges from £96,000 per annum to a sorry few that refuse to support their SACREs at all. Within this graph we are sadly very near the bottom.

The majority of our current funding, goes to our schools' advisors. RE Today. The remaining small sum is put towards the review and production of the new syllabus every 5 years.

Currently we are receiving £5,000 per annum This barely enables us to hold two meetings per year, which are held in the Autumn and Spring terms. We then have some seven to eight months between our Spring and Autumn meetings, when members lose momentum and ideas become lost due to the length of time. To run at a minimally acceptable level of SACRE we would like to reinstate the summer term meeting so that we can spend the time required to discuss and make decisions regarding our statutory requirements. Currently we are overrunning on our two meetings a year. We are unable to discuss considerations fully, thereby making decisions in a more rushed manner than we would like. We are finding it hard to retain our faith representatives, as they cannot see how they can be of any great benefit due to being unable to following through with interesting initiatives.

For us to hold a meeting this coming summer term we would require a further £500 to pay our schools advisor.

We were very fortunate the last time that the contract for School Advisors was at bidding stage that we were able to persuade RE Today to bid at half of their usual rate. This was a one off. No other RE Advisor was prepared to bid at the low level of money available. The reason that we are able to make some savings in this direction is that RE today share the information to a number of SACREs and we are effectively supported by another SACRE that has more reasonable funding. This was definitely a one off and we cannot expect this consideration in the future.

We need some training.

There are only three members of our current SACRE board who have ever received any training.

It is our proposal that we re-join NASACRE. This would enable us to attend their conferences and keep abreast of good practice within RE and within SACREs around the country. In this way it would enhance our ability to support our schools and would mean that we could access the zoom training programme, that has recently been developed, at a much-reduced cost.

- Current annual cost for NASACRE members is £120
- For two members to attend the annual SACRE conference. Usually these are around £110 per person, however the zoom conference in 2021 was at a much-reduced fee of £40 for two delegates and £60 for four.
- The current training series cost around £500 which covers the 10 sessions. This is for all SACRE members whose SACRE is a member of NASACRE

We would request that you consider

**Annual membership x2	£240
Conference delegates x2	£40
Training for all SACRE members	£500

** Due to time of receiving any agreed funds it would be useful for us to have 2023 membership ahead of time as we would be unable to take advantage of conference and training programme if continuance of funds is unavailable.

Schools project

We propose that we hold a pupil's day for primary children in Hereford. To be held at one of our senior schools. (We have been offered a school). This to be held on a Saturday in order that children can invite their parents to a fun day to meet those of various faiths living within our county. Interaction with the children by role play, music and dance and a 'worship experience'. Hopefully the cultural experience will include enjoying various foods used in ceremonies. This will enhance both the children's and parents understanding of those of faith in a non-evangelical way. If successful we propose that this is repeated every three years or so. Student teachers will be encouraged to be involved with the organisation and running of the event, which will help with their commitments.

We propose to run the idea in one our villages this coming summer to develop our thinking.

We require some funding for various elements, including food. For advertising and any other needed expenses that we have not itemised at this stage. This I would suggest should be in the region of £1,000 which would more than cover our ideas.

Schools conference and debate

We propose to hold conferences for pupils at key stage 4 in the Autumn term. Perhaps biennially at this stage, but would hope that it could be funded annually. These types of events have proved popular and invaluable to student who are approaching their exams, giving an opportunity for workshops and debates at a level which will enhance their understanding of comparative religion. The format is that pupils from different schools meet and work together throughout the day with workshops in the morning and a debate involving faith representatives in the afternoon. These are often run by RE Today at a cost of £1,000 per facilitator and usually involve 2 - 2 1/2 people. We also need to offer travel expenses to those faith representatives who attend and it is customary to offer a finger buffet style lunch. These are variable costs of course

We have been underfunding for many years and it is our sincere wish that we start to redress the balance.

Chairperson of Herefordshire SACRE
Venerable Tsultrim Tenzin Choesang