

Item 8

Recommendations of the Schools Block Working Group

Contact for further information:
Schools Forum Clerk
schoolsforum@lancashire.gov.uk

Brief Summary

On 4 December 2025, the Schools Block Working Group considered several reports, including:

1. **Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025/26 and 2026/27 Forecast**
2. **Schools Block Funding Arrangements 2026/27**
3. **Clawback Exemption Requests 2026/27**
4. **Supply Cover Insurance and Maternity Scheme for Lancashire Schools Arrangements 2026/27**
5. **Any Other Business**

A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided in this report.

Recommendations

The Forum is asked to:

- a) Note the report from the Schools Block Working Group held on 4 December 2025,
- b) Ratify the Working Group's recommendations.

Detail

On 4 December 2025, the Schools Block Working Group considered several reports. A summary of the information presented, and the Working Group's recommendations are provided below:

1. Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring 2025/26 and 2026/27 Forecast

Members considered the most recent Dedicated Schools Grant Monitoring report. Following the reporting of the council's DSG deficit of £22.43m at March 2025, monitoring has been provided showing the period 1-7 budget monitoring position of the DSG and longer-term financial forecast.

The DSG is currently forecasting a **£65.29m** overspend at 31 March 2026, with a forecast cumulative DSG deficit total of **£87.72m**. **There are however additional forecast financial implications on DSG due to the SEND recovery plan, with current forecasting showing an anticipated increase in the in year**



overspend to £119.16m, resulting in a forecast cumulative DSG deficit of £142.44m by March 2026. Further details are provided later within the report.

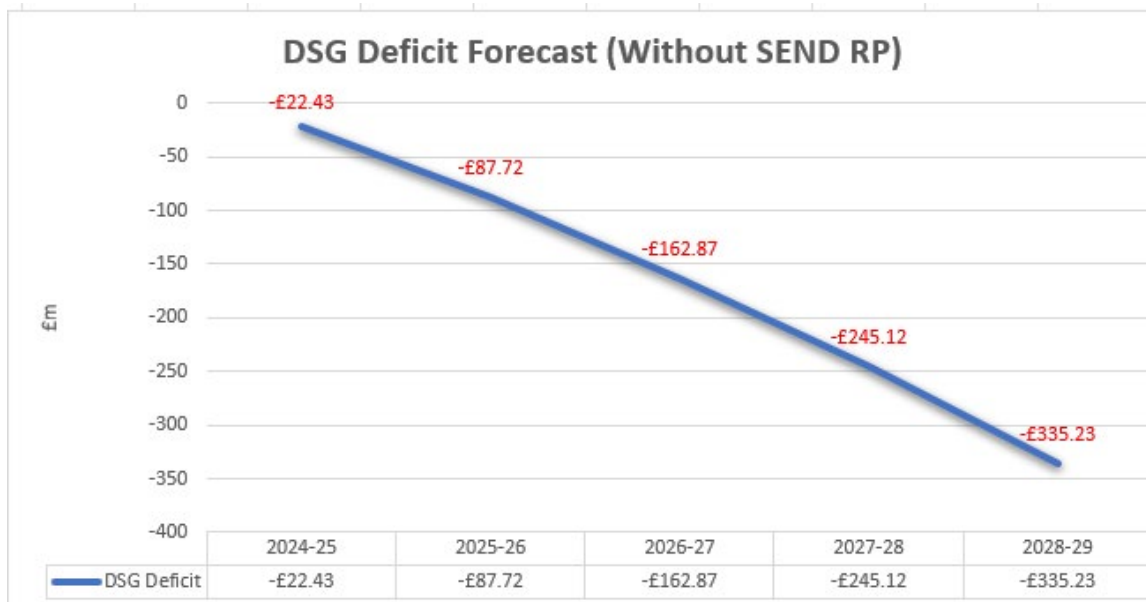
There remains significant ongoing financial pressure facing the HNB block as the demand and costs continue to rise as the number of children and young people with EHCPs continues to grow, but the HNB Block funding from DfE has not kept paced and increased in line with this growth. Over the years, this has created financial pressures on a national level resulting in many authorities holding deficit DSG balances.

The remaining DSG funding blocks are forecast to remain near to the agreed budget line.

A full monitoring breakdown of the HNB has been provided at **Appendix A**.

DSG Period 1-7 Budget Monitoring 2025/26

DSG Monitoring 2025/26 - High Level Summary			
	Budget (£)	Forecast (£)	Variance (£)
High Needs Block	£208,328,762	£272,762,231	£64,433,469
Early Years Block	£202,149,983	£202,151,164	£1,181
Schools Block	£1,051,778,166	£1,052,519,056	£740,890
Central School Services Block (CSSB)	£8,633,102	£8,496,545	-£136,557
Early Years Block DSG Adj 2024/25	£0	£248,456	£248,456
Total	£1,470,890,013	£1,536,177,453	£65,287,439



SEND Recovery Plan – DSG Impact

As detailed within the papers of the schools forum working group papers in September/October, whilst the monitoring position shows current DSG spend to

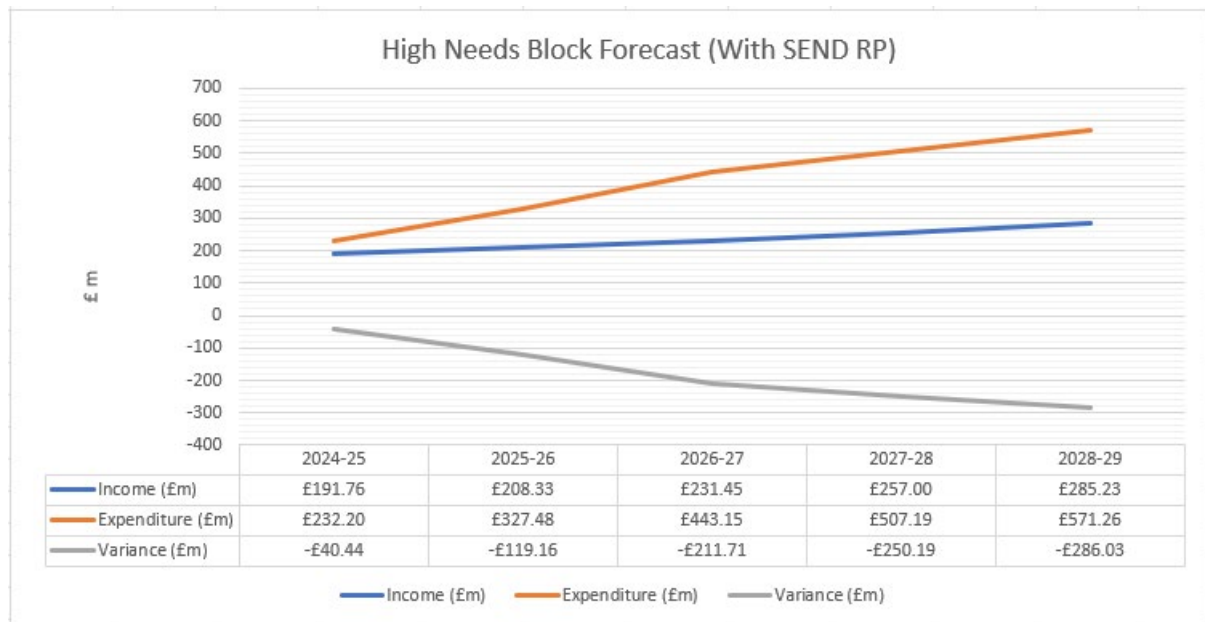


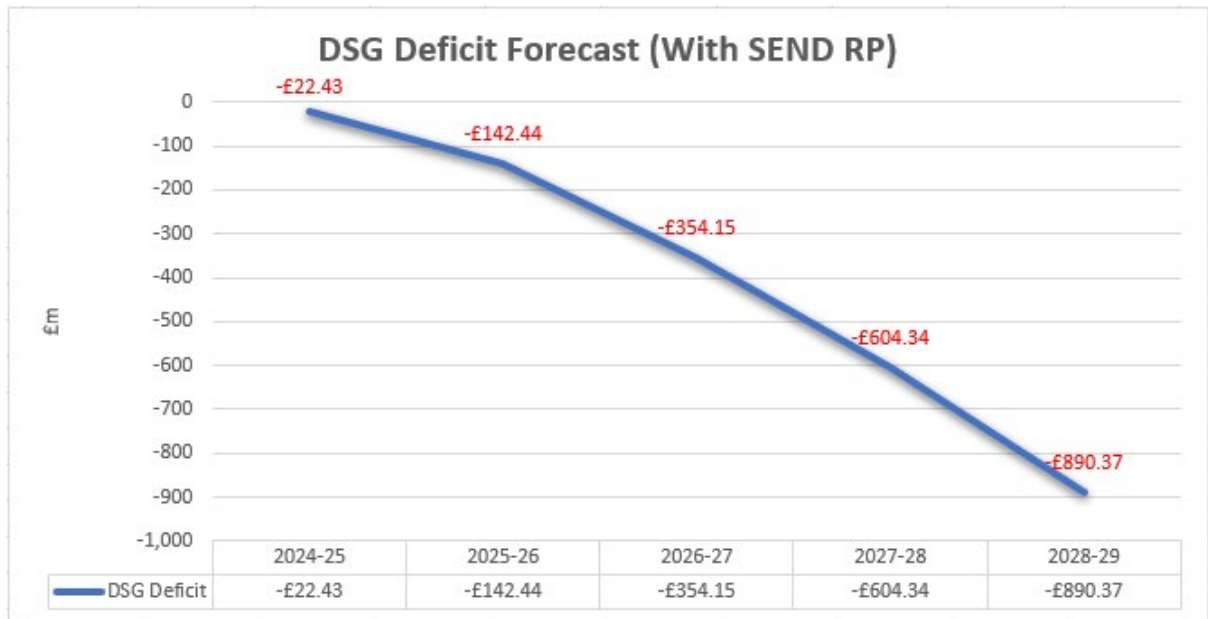
date, the impact of clearing the backlog and increasing compliance rate is forecast to further increase the financial pressure on the HNB DSG.

The latest forecasting from October now indicates a further 3,327 (23%) EHCPs are currently projected to be issued By March 2026, resulting in 17,508 EHCPs by the end of March 2026. The number of EHCPs is expected to increase thereafter, with the total number of EHCPs projected to be 23,418 by March 2029. This includes an assumption that 1,000 EHCP's are ceased annually.

Due to Lancashire special schools being at full capacity, the forecast assumes that 48.40% of the additional EHCPs will be placed at independent provision at an average placement cost of £57,000. The remaining 51.60% are assumed to be placed within mainstream schools at an average placement cost of £9,100, however **the financial implications will only be known once all EHCPs are finalised.**

The impact of this is a forecasted in year overspend of **£119.16m within the HNB in 2025/26, and a total DSG deficit of £142.44m by March 2026.**





The impact of the SEND recovery plan is being regularly monitored, and an updated forecast position will be presented at the next working groups

Statutory Override

Currently there is a statutory override in place, which specifically allows councils to exclude deficits related to HNB DSG from their main revenue accounts. This means these deficits do not count against the council's general fund and councils are not required to immediately balance these deficits by reducing budgets to finance the shortfall. The override was introduced in financial year 2019/20 and has recently been extended again, until March 2028 due to the growing scale of SEND-related financial pressure.

Whilst the impact of a DSG deficit on the council's revenue budget is mitigated by the statutory override, the council is still required to finance the deficit as expenditure is being incurred without the cash being received to fund it. Ordinarily councils are not allowed to borrow for revenue expenditure. Under the Local Government Act 2003 local authorities are however able to borrow for the purpose of prudent management of their financial affairs.

According to the [County Councils Network](#), at March 2025 the debt accrued by councils stood at £4bn. With SEND costs rising 23% over the last twelve months, and with demand showing no sign of abating, these deficits are projected to grow to a total and cumulative deficit of **£17.8bn by 2029**.

The statutory override has been a necessary stopgap, but it is not a solution. The conclusion of the sector is that without decisive reform and sustainable funding, local authorities will face escalating financial pressures that threaten both SEND provision and wider council services.

**The working group:
Noted the Report**



Members were reminded not to speculate about any future government decisions, as no further information is available until the national spending announcements expected in the spring. Minor corrections were noted in the draft text, but no further issues were raised.

2. School Block Funding Arrangements 2026/27

In recent announcements, The Department for Education (DfE) published the 2026/27 NFF provisional funding allocations for the 2026 to 2027 financial year through the schools and central school services national funding formulae (NFF). The DfE confirmed that the High Needs Block allocations will be published at a later date.

Funding for mainstream schools through the schools NFF includes funding that was allocated in 2025 to 2026 through the schools budget support grant (SBSG) and National Insurance contributions (NICs) grant, which has been 'rolled in' to the schools NFF in 2026 to 2027 to help simplify the funding system.

As previously communicated, starting from September 2026, free school meals (FSM) will be extended to all children in households receiving Universal Credit. For 2026 to 2027 there will be no changes to the schools NFF to allocate funding for this expansion of FSM. Instead, the funding needed for the FSM expansion will be provided through a separate grant. Further details on how this grant will be calculated will be published separately in due course.

Nationally, funding through the mainstream schools national funding formula (NFF) is **rising by 2.1%**, with Lancashire's forecast uplift projected to be **2.6%**, with the 2025-26 grant funding for SBSG & NIC rolled in on top of this.

The announcements also confirmed that Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations will be published in December 2025. As a result, the LA does not currently anticipate any delays to the schools budget process for 2026/27, with the DfE confirming the schools budget submission for local authorities of **22 January 2026**.

As in 2025 to 2026, local authorities will only be allowed to use NFF factors in their local formulae, and must use all NFF factors, except any locally determined premises factors. Local authorities will also be required to move their local formulae factors a further 10% closer to the NFF values, compared with where they were in 2025 to 2026, unless they are classed as 'mirroring' the NFF (that is, within +/- 2.5% of the NFF values).

Local authorities will continue to set a minimum funding guarantee in local formulae, which in 2026 to 2027 must be between -0.5% and 0%.

As members will be aware, Lancashire has already adopted the NFF as the local funding methodology, so there are no implications in 2026/27 from DfE requirements.

The main features in the schools NFF for 2026 to 2027 are:

- No structural changes from 2025 to 2026



- The basic per pupil rate, free school meals Ever6 values, and lump sum have increased to reflect the rolling in of the separate SBSG and NICs grant from 2025 to 2026.
- On top of this, a further overall increase has been applied to school and pupil-led factors as follows
 - 2.11% increase has been applied to the basic entitlement; FSM6 values and the lump sum factors
 - 2.11% increase has also been applied to the IDACI, low prior attainment (LPA), English as an Additional Language (EAL), mobility, sparsity and split sites factors
 - 1.66% uplift has been applied to the FSM factor in the NFF, in line with inflation forecasts – as of the GDP deflator forecast of March 2025
- The funding floor is set at 0%. This ensures that no school will see a cash reduction in its pupil-led per pupil funding they attract, compared to the 2025 to 2026 baseline. For 2026 to 2027 the baseline includes rolled in funding to reflect the NICs grant and the annualised equivalent of the SBSG

Minimum Pupil Funding (MPF)

The DfE announcements included the relevant MPF levels for primary and secondary schools, which incorporate rolling in of the NIC & SBSG grants:

- The primary schools, the MPF level will be £5,115 per pupil in 2026/27 compared to £4,995 per pupil in 2025/26.
- For secondary schools, the MPF level will be £6,640 per pupil from 2026/27 compared to £6,465 per pupil in 2025/26.

Members are reminded that the MPF levels are not the same as the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) or the basic pupil element in your school funding. AWPU is the rate set to allocate the basic entitlement of funding for pre-16 pupils in mainstream schools that is provided for all pupils. This is then supplemented by other formula factors based on the characteristics of your pupils and the school, including your lump sum allocation. The MPF funding ensures that schools receive a minimum level of funding calculated by dividing all your pupil led factors plus the lump sum allocation by the number of pupils on roll. This calculation excludes other factors, for example rates.

Local Schools Block Formula 2026/27

Even though Lancashire has adopted the national funding formula methodology as the local funding formula, a degree of local discretion remains about the Schools Block arrangements in 2026/27. Further information is provided below.

Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG)

Following consultation with schools and academies in relation to the level of MFG to be applied in Lancashire for 2026/27 schools forum members voted to support the maximum funding floor, which has now been confirmed at 0.00%

Notional SEN



Local authorities are required to identify a notional budget for their mainstream schools which helps them comply with their duty to use their 'best endeavours' to meet the special educational needs (SEN) of their pupils. **The notional SEN budget is not a separate budget or funding allocation** but is identified within a maintained school's delegated budget share, or an academy's general annual grant, and is calculated by each LA using their local mainstream schools funding formula factors.

The DfE's 2026/27 operational guidance emphasised that LAs should keep their notional SEN budget under review to make sure that their schools' notional SEN budget is a realistic amount, and that any shortfall in this notional budget can be appropriately met from additional high needs targeted funding. High needs top-up funding is allocated in addition to the notional SEN budget.

Following the removal of English as an Additional Language (EAL) from notional SEN, the local authority are not planning on making any changes to the notional SEN calculation. This is due to the delayed SEND reforms which are now expected in the new year, with the DfE expected to issue further guidance.

The Working Group are asked to consider this position and support the proposal for the notional SEN calculation for the 2026/27 financial year.

Dedicated schools grant (DSG) transfers

Local authorities continue to be able to transfer up to 0.5% of their schools block to other blocks of the DSG, with schools forum approval.

Any DSG underspend brought forward from the previous year can be used to support the wider schools block, central school services block, the high needs block, or the early years block.

As part of the consultation undertaken with schools and academies in September, schools forum voted in favour of a 0.50% transfer from schools block to assist with pressures facing the High Needs Block (HNB)

Deficit management

The DfE recognises that there may well be some local authorities which, despite their best efforts and the increased funding for the high needs block, will still not be able to pay off their historic deficit from the DSG over the next few years. In these cases, the department expects to work together with the local authority to agree a plan of action to enable the local authority to pay off its deficit over time.

The LA is currently producing a DSG management plan, and once complete this will be brought to schools forum at a future meeting.

Central School Services Block (CSSB)

As members are aware, the Central School Services Block (CSSB) is made up from a formulaic 'ongoing responsibilities' element that relates to responsibilities that local authorities continue to have for all schools, and a 'historic commitments' element that relates to certain commitments entered before April 2013.

This funds all local authorities for functions that they have a statutory obligation to perform for all students in the schools and academies they maintain.



In 2026 to 2027, for those local authorities that receive it, historic commitments funding has been reduced by 20% of which Lancashire's provisional allocation includes this reduction. Members will be aware that the DfE agreed to protect our historic commitment funding at £1.9m due to this being PFI contracted expenditure. As a result, our provisional allocation is expected to further increase by circa £328,000, with a forecasted CSSB total funding allocation of £8.71m.

Provisional Allocations for 2026/27

Government NFF announcements in November 2025 were accompanied by provisional data on the allocations LAs will receive for 2026/27, and notional allocations at individual school level. The data is available [here](#) and contains all primary and secondary schools and academies nationally.

It must be noted that the provisional allocations are calculated using pupil numbers from the October 2024 census. Final allocations, to be issued to schools in February 2026, will be based on pupil numbers from the October 2025 school census.

Even though schools are guaranteed an increase in funding per pupil for their pupil-led funding in the NFF in 2026/27, allocations may still reduce at an individual school level if a school has fewer pupils than before.

Lancashire Position

Announcements also contained provisional 2026/27 allocations for DSG funding blocks, except early years and high needs. The Lancashire information for schools block and the central schools services block is provided in the table below

Forecast DSG Income	2025/2026 £m's	DfE notional 2026/27 allocation (using Oct 25 data) £m's	Difference £m's	Difference %
Schools Block	1,076	1,104	28	2.6
CSSB	8.63	8.7	0.07	1
Total	1,084.63	1,112.7	28.07	2.52

It must be remembered that actual DSG allocations in Lancashire, to be published in December 2025, could be lower than those in the provisional notification from the DfE, dependant on pupil data from the October 2025 school census.

The Schools Block figures are also shown without the Growth Fund allocations, as these are calculated outside the NFF methodology.

Falling Rolls

For the first time in 2024/25 DfE allocated funding based on growth and falling rolls.

Funding will be allocated based on the reduction in pupil numbers that medium super output areas (MSOA) within each local authorities experience for each year. It is based



on the observed differences between the primary and secondary number on roll in each MSOA in a local authority between the most recent October pupil census and the census in the previous October.

Local authorities will continue to have discretion over whether to operate a falling rolls fund. Where local authorities operate a fund, they will only be able to provide funding where the most recent school capacity (SCAP) survey shows that school places will be required in 2026/27, or the subsequent two years.

The LA is not proposing to implement a falling rolls policy due to the continuing pressures expected on both the Schools Block and wider DSG in 2026/27.

The working group: Noted the Report

- **Although indicative figures have been published, these will be subject to change once updated census data becomes available**
- **A query was raised on what the 0.5% transfer practically means, and this will be addressed under a later agenda item [AOB].**

3. Clawback Exemption Requests 2025/26

In July 2025, the Forum considered the School Balances and Clawback Policy for 2025/26 and agreed that clawback should be reintroduced on excessive revenue balances at March 2026. Historically the guideline balance was set at 12% of Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) income for all phases of maintained school with a minimum threshold of £75,000, however it was decided that the CFR threshold would be reduced to 8% for 2025/26 school balances.

The 8% will be implemented with immediate effect and will be applied on school balances at 31 March 2026. As a result, the authority has received several clawback exemption requests from Lancashire schools. As requested by members, a summary of the schools number on role and financial forecast are provided.

Request A

A Secondary School is requesting £200,000 to be exempt from clawback at March 2026.

The request seeks a clawback exemption to fund an extension of science facilities due to insufficient specialist space for curriculum needs. The project options include building a new unit or converting an existing classroom, with the new build favoured for capacity reasons. A Wolfson Grant application in Spring 2025 aims to secure £100,000, and an exemption of £200,000 is requested contingent on success. The grant outcome will be announced in October 2026, with construction planned within 18 months, likely before summer 2027.

Request B

A Secondary School is requesting £440,000 to be exempt from clawback at March 2026.



The school has submitted planning permission for a new toilet and changing room facility, with completion targeted for September 2026. The project will replace temporary leased facilities currently in use and enhance community access for lettings outside school hours. Funding will come primarily from reserves accumulated through a science-related program, supplemented by school capital reserves and DFC funds. Only a small portion of the cost (approximately £118,000) will be spent in the current financial year, so the school is requesting exemption from clawback on the remaining balance. Estimated costs and cashflow statements have been provided, and further information can be supplied if needed.

Request C

A Secondary School is requesting £100,000 to be exempt from clawback at March 2026.

The school currently lacks outdoor sports facilities, relying on a multi-use hall for PE lessons, which often conflicts with other activities like dining, exams, and assemblies. To improve physical education, the school plans to create an outdoor PE area. The estimated project cost is around £100,000, with work scheduled between 20 July 2026 and 28 August 2026. The project was initially intended for the previous summer but was delayed due to short notice. Quotes were obtained in July 2025, and updated quotes will be requested in the new year.

Request D

A Primary School is requesting £120,000 to be exempt from clawback at March 2026.

A school is requesting an exemption from clawback for £120,000. The funds will contribute to extending an existing studio to create a dedicated nursery unit under Section 27. Currently, the nursery occupies two classrooms, and the proposed extension would consolidate Key Stage 1 and nursery areas, improving safeguarding by ensuring more staff presence. The nursery is vital for pupil numbers and financial sustainability. The extension, designed by external surveyors, has an estimated cost of £395,000. A bid for the remaining funds has been submitted, and the school's contribution would come from the requested exemption.

Request E

A Secondary School is requesting £80,000 to be exempt from clawback at March 2026.

The school is requesting an exemption from clawback because it is building up reserves to fund the future replacement of an all-weather pitch surface. Based on professional advice, the school plans to save approximately £10,000 annually over 10–12 years, as the estimated cost of relaying the pitch carpet is between £120,000 and £150,000. No quotes are available yet since this is a long-term savings strategy.

Request F

A Lancashire Secondary School is requesting £300,000 to be exempt from clawback at March 2026.

A secondary school is requesting an exemption from clawback due to a major building project funded by the Department for Education. The new school building is



scheduled for completion by late 2026, with relocation planned for early 2027 and demolition of the old site by mid-2027. Certain project costs, such as furniture, fittings, and blinds, are excluded from the funded works, so the school has been saving funds to cover these items. The school notes that further exemption requests may be needed depending on project timelines. The project officially started in June 2025 and is expected to finish by August 2027.

Request G

A Lancashire Secondary School is requesting £506,000 to be exempt from clawback at March 2026.

A secondary school is requesting an exemption from the clawback of reserves for 2025/26 to retain funds for essential projects. The school, which serves over 1,500 pupils including a significant proportion with SEND and 19% eligible for Free School Meals, is part of the DfE Schools Rebuilding Programme with a £40m+ rebuild underway. Delays in the programme have impacted financial planning, and the school must fund certain costs such as furniture and non-fixed items in later years. Existing buildings, over 50 years old, require urgent maintenance to remain safe until at least 2029, with works scheduled outside term time. Additional commitments include a future contribution to a delayed artificial pitch project. Rising staff costs and planned capital contributions are reducing reserves, and the school's three-year budget plan reflects these pressures. The exemption request covers £310K for new-build related costs and £196K for urgent maintenance.

Request H

A Primary School is requesting £35,000 to be exempt from clawback at March 2026.

The school seeks approval for a £35,000 clawback exemption to fund two projects scheduled for Easter 2026. These include tarmac, ground, and drainage works (circa £20k) required for health and safety reasons, delayed due to contractor availability and coordination with nearby building works, and an IT/CCTV upgrade (circa £15k) following an audit that revealed major deficiencies. The upgrade cannot proceed until the re-roofing project, funded through the LCC capital works programme and due for completion in January 2026, is finished. Additionally, a DfE-funded decarbonisation project is planned, though funding arrangements remain unclear.

The working group is asked to make a recommendation on the clawback requests, which will then be ratified at the Schools Forum on 9th January 2026.

The working group:

Noted the Report

Discussed each request and during discussion of Item 6, the group suggested several improvements for how clawback exemptions should be handled in future years:

- **Add Proportionality Checks**
 - Look at what percentage of a school's annual income remains in reserves at year-end.
 - Helps judge whether reserves are appropriate or excessive.
- **Require More Detailed Project Information**
 - Clearer schedule of works, end dates, timeline of costs, and invoice timing (especially for cases like C and D).



- Confirmation of grant outcomes where projects rely on bids.
- **Scrutinise Future-Year Reserves**
 - Some schools still show very large projected balances, even after exemptions.
 - Schools should explain rising reserves or stockpiling.
- **Track Repeated Requests**
 - Schools can apply every year but requests are currently anonymous.
 - Group suggested tracking repeat applicants and asking for justification on multi-year exemptions.
- **Improve the Information Template**
 - Hard to gather full details from schools.
 - A more structured template would ensure all required information is provided up front.
- **Consider Long-Term Policy Changes**
- **For future years (not this year):**
 - Potentially tighten the exemption criteria, or
 - Consider the option of removing exemptions altogether, depending on how the 8% threshold works in practice.

Officers noted these suggestions and will assess both their viability and the capacity to implement them in future years.

Recommended the below for each request:

- **A — Outcome: Supported.**
- **B — Scrutiny noted high reserves, but request met policy requirements.
Outcome: Supported.**
- **C — Members flagged unclear timelines, unclear invoicing points, and questions about whether the balance truly risks clawback.
Outcome: Further information required (not supported at this stage).**
- **D — Concerns were raised about rising reserves and uncertainty around securing external grant funding.
Outcome: Not supported.**
- **E — Despite financial concerns, the request aligned with long-term capital planning.
Outcome: Supported.**
- **F — A secondary school requested £300k for costs linked to a DfE-funded major rebuild, covering unfunded items (e.g., furniture, fittings). Spending trajectory showed money would be used.
Outcome: Supported.**
- **G — Outcome: Supported.**
- **H — Outcome: Supported.**

4. School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme 2026/27

Each year reports are presented to the Forum about the arrangements for the School Teaching and Support Staff Supply Reimbursement Scheme. This report sets out proposals for the 2026/27 Scheme changes for consideration. The Supply



Insurance Scheme had been underspent by £131,000 for the year 2024/25. The Schools Forum agreed to hold this underspend within the Supply Reimbursement Scheme reserve. The reserves are currently held at circa £1.67m.

The scheme arrangements agreed with the Forum looked to increase premiums in line with increasing the reimbursement rates. Following the finalisation of the supply scheme arrangements with the Forum in January 2025, individual offers were issued to schools and academies for consideration.

The tables below show the previous year's take-up and the existing take-up.

2024/25 Take up including academies

Block	Teaching plus support staff cover	Teaching no support staff cover	Support staff cover only	Total
Early Years Block	12	2	1	15
Schools Block	153	145	4	302
High Needs Block	23	3	1	27
Total	188	150	6	344

2025/26 Take up including academies

Block	Teaching plus support staff cover	Teaching no support staff cover	Support staff cover only	Total
Early Years Block	12	3	1	16
Schools Block	139	118	4	261
High Needs Block	24	2	0	26
Total	175	123	5	303

In 2025/26, 41 fewer school joined the scheme in comparison to the previous year. For reference, only 1 additional school signed up for the scheme in 2024/25 than were involved in 2023/24.

April 2025 to October 2025 Monitoring

In 2023/24, the processing of claims moved to within the Schools Finance team, this has allowed us to monitor the scheme more closely. Based on the number of claims submitted from April to October 2025, the 2025/26 scheme is forecasted a c£1.3m underspend at March 2026. Modelling is provided in the table below.

Year	Number of claims submitted April - October	Number of claims submitted April - March	Scheme Outturn Position
2023/24	1378	3342	£37,080
2024/25	1418	3492	£131,791



2025/26	1268	3093 Forecast	-£1,333,211 Forecast
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Members should be aware that the scheme outturn for 2025/26 may subject to change if the number of claims is lower or higher than anticipated. Members should be advised that, on average based on scheme patterns, c40% of claims are submitted during April to October, therefore a large influx of claims is expected prior to the year-end deadlines. Therefore, the current modelling may not be a true reflection of the year end position. It is anticipated that the scheme will end the financial year with an underspend, based on the patterns from previous scheme years.

As per usual practice, the scheme outturn for this financial year will be presented to the working groups during the summer term meetings.

The 2025/26 Service Level Agreement can be found in Appendix A for reference.

Scheme Proposals 2026/27

Scheme Operation

The operation of the scheme has been flexible in recent years. It is proposed that the existing scheme rules operating in 2025/26 should remain in place for 2026/27.

Scheme Premiums

A 4% increase had been awarded for teaching staff from September 2025, for support staff an increase of 3.2% had been awarded from April 2025. It is usual practice to increase teaching and support staff premiums annually so that reimbursement rates can also increase in line with pay rises for the different categories of staff. Due to the level of reserves held, it is proposed that charges remain at the 2025/26 levels.

Reimbursement rates

It is usual practice to increase the reimbursement rates to reflect the increase in scheme premiums and the current financial modelling of the scheme. Therefore, it is proposed to increase the scheme reimbursement rates simply by 4% for both teaching and support staff.

Option for Consideration

- For the charges to be held at the 2025/26 level and increase the reimbursement rates by 4% to recognise the level of reserves held.

Service Offer to Schools

Once scheme arrangements and charging/reimbursement rates are finalised by the Forum in January 2026, a formal individualised 2026/27 scheme offer will be issued to all schools and academies.

The working group:

Noted the report

Recommended the option for approval.



5. Any other Business

- **High Needs Block figures not yet released; all current modelling is indicative, based on October 2024 census data. Updated figures will follow once October 2025 census is available.**
- **0.5% transfer from Schools Block to High Needs Block will fund three targeted initiatives:**
 - **Primary inclusion support**
 - **Expanded PRU/special school outreach and intervention**
 - **Bringing sensory assessments in-house (cost-saving)**
- **Proposals will be discussed and finalised at extraordinary working group meetings:**
 - **8 Dec – Early Years Working Group**
 - **9 Dec – High Needs Working Group**
- **An extraordinary Schools Forum meeting will be held on 17 December (Teams, 10am) to vote on:**
 - **High Needs initiatives funded by the transfer**
 - **Revised Early Years 1% retention proposal**
- **A Schools Forum Budget Meeting will take place on 9 January, with decisions from 17 December required beforehand.**
- **Members requested a list of all meeting dates to support attendance during the busy pre-Christmas period.**
- **Emphasis placed on monitoring, KPIs, and adjusting or stopping initiatives if they do not deliver expected impact.**

