Schools' Block Working Group – 03/11/2025

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams
1:00pm to 2:30pm

Attendees	Initials	Organisation	Present
Tyrone Myton (Chair)	TM	Shirley Performing Arts College	✓
Markie Hayden	MH	Norbury High Schools for Girls	✓
Mark Humphreys	MHu	St Thomas Becket, Catholic Primary	X
Dan Bowden	DB	Greenvale Primary School	✓
Chris Andrew	CA	St James the Great Primary School	X
Clare Cranham	CC	Kensington Avenue Primary School	X
Jenny Bartlett	JB	Head of Finance	X
Abioye Asimolowo	AA	Finance Manager	✓
Brian Smith	BS	Finance Manager	✓
Shelley Davies	SD	Director of Education	✓
Miriam Sechere	MS	Education Development Lead	X
Mori Bates	MB	Clerk	✓

Item	Agenda	Lead
1	**Welcome and apologies**	**TM**
	1.1 Apologies received from MS and JB	
2	**Previous Minutes**	**TM**
	2.1 Previous minutes read and reviewed – agreed to be a true record.	
	2.2 DB queried the definition of a small school, of which BS confirmed is due to be clarified in the High Needs Working Group meeting on Thursday (4th December)	
3	**Scheme for Financing Schools**	**AA**
	3.1 AA presented the working group with a paper on the scheme for financing schools, whereby it was questioned if a recommendation can be giving based on information from a paper that was received on the same day as the meeting	
	3.2 It was noted that the existing policy should be presented on the left and the proposed scheme on the right for clarity. Some comments were make that it is unclear what the differences are between the April 2022 column and the December 2025 proposal, of which would be key elements to note when giving comments or a recommendation. The working group requested that the differences be clear, and if there are elements which cannot be amended, this needs to be highlighted.	
	3.3 Once approval is received, the paper will be circulated with the working group for comments.	

4 DSG Budget Monitoring **AA**

4.1 AA briefly presented a paper on the DSG Budget Monitoring, whereby SD explained that the Safety Valve had a targeted overspend last year of £600,000 of which the aim was to get that down to zero by 27/28. Unfortunately, given the significant increase in demand for high needs, this is not going to be possible as the forecasted overspend stands at £13.9m.

4.2 There are a number of reasons as to why the increase has been so dramatic – for example, children in reception are requiring more specialist places and having to be placed in out of borough schools, as well as a significant uplift for independent schools.

4.3 TM queried the agreement for a disapplication request that was designed to address part of the overspend. It now looks like the transfer is not helping to reduce something that will potentially not come down. SD reiterated that the disapplication request is part of the safety valve agreement and something that has to be adhered to.

4.4 TM added that they have explored having an on-site ELP, but the biggest issue lies with staffing costs. If the LA were able to absorb theses costs, there is a chance that more schools would be able to have alternative provisions on site.

5 Any Other Business **ALL**

N/A

Date of next meeting: **19th January 2026**