



Sheffield Schools Forum 29 September 2022 Executive Summary of Decisions

Procurement of Gas and Electricity Supply

Forum members were asked to consider their schools' strategy for the procurement of energy, to help mitigate the risk created by unpredictable markets and make a recommendation to the wider school sector.

- Sheffield City Council (SCC) purchases energy through a compliant framework – Crown Commercial Services (CCS) on behalf of schools who currently subscribe to SCC's energy procurement framework.
- SCC has made a decision to adopt a long-term purchasing strategy for both gas and electricity – the V30 basket (for a period of three and a half years). This longer period should help level out peaks in the market. It won't necessarily always give the cheapest price, but it poses the least risk.
- SCC is advising that schools adopt the same approach and have an option to remain part of the Council's framework and be moved to the V30 basket.
- Schools can be in the CCS framework without being via SCC. However, the advantage of being within SCC's framework is a dedicated account manager.

The Forum agreed to recommend the V30 contract, and a communication will be sent out to all schools.

Capital Allocations

The Forum was updated on the three allocations:

- Basic Need Allocation - there is a pressure in the south west of the city and we need to expand quickly in area five – to identify places on a temporary basis for the next academic year.
- School Condition Allocation - relates to maintained schools. We will receive £3.5m for one year but have longer term plans and a backlog of work required to be undertaken which is estimated at a value of £45m.
- High Needs Provision Allocation - the allocation has increased substantially to support increased demand of special educational needs or disability (SEND) places in the city.

The Forum agreed to contact the Secretary of State again to highlight the issue of inequity in the system for maintained schools in terms of building condition.

High Needs and Mainstream Sufficiency

The Forum was provided with an update on sufficiency as per papers 5a and b. With regard to High Needs sufficiency:

- The increased High Needs Capital allocation supports the development of special school places. However, there are still pressures in the system.
- The refreshed sufficiency plan is in progress and due to be presented in December 2022 to the Education, Children and Families Policy Committee.

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) are key drivers for demand, in particular at transition points.
- A number of schemes are currently being progressed.
- Next steps include working with the sector – communication to be sent out in October.

School Surplus Balances

- As at year end 2021/22 surplus balances for maintained schools totalled £17m. This figure includes deficit balances of £3.4m.
- Visits have now been undertaken to the schools with the highest balances and a £1,225k clawback agreed, and schools will be re-visited around December time to progress their plans.
- Work will be undertaken via the Forum Funding Working Group to consider how this clawback be invested into the school system - the Forum acknowledged that it may be most beneficial to invest the funds into invest to save capital projects for maintained schools.

Early Years Disability Access Fund (DAF) and Deprivation Consultations

- Consultation was undertaken with the sector to consider how a one-off DAF balance of up to £554k should be allocated; and to consider distribution of £1.2m Deprivation funding.
- **The Forum approved** the recommendations of the Early Years Working Group:
 - That mandatory deprivation funding factor continues to be paid to the sector based on Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) data from 1 April 2023 onwards and that it be reviewed every four years.
 - To distribute the one-off DAF amount of up to £554k to all current 3 and 4-year-old Free Early Learning (FEL) providers who received funding for FEL participation hours in 2021/22 and that this be reviewed every three years.
 - That any future DAF balances would be distributed using the same methodology.

Forum papers are available to download via [Sheffield Schools Forum](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/sheffield-schools-forum) (<https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/schools-childcare/sheffield-schools-forum>)

You can also download a list of Forum members on this page should you wish to raise an issue/ask a question

If you have any queries about the Schools Forum, please contact:

amanda.murray@sheffield.gov.uk