

Committee:	Schools Forum
Meeting Date:	21 st November 2024
Title:	Approval of De-delegated Budgets 2025-26
Author:	Sonya Harban, Strategic Finance Lead CYP
Decision making / consultative / information:	Decision Making
Who can vote?	De-delegated – by phase – primary and secondary maintained schools' members only

What is the Forum being asked to decide?

1. Schools Forum is asked to agree the de-delegation of funding back to the Local Authority for the continuation of each of the following services detailed in Annexes A-D: Trade Unions, Local Authority School Improvement function (statutory duties), Support to under-performing ethnic groups including bilingual learners, and Specialist Education Services (previously referred to as CISS), by phase for maintained primary and secondary schools.

Reason for recommendation

2. Funding for de-delegated services is allocated through the funding formula to all schools, but can be passed back i.e., de-delegated, for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools, so that the service can be provided centrally.

Alternative options

3. Schools Forum could decide not to approve the continuation of these de-delegated budgets. Schools would then have to manage these services individually.

Who will be affected by this decision?

4. The decision whether a service should be de-delegated by phase will apply to all maintained mainstream schools in that phase.
5. De-delegation is not an option for academies, special schools, nurseries or PRUs as per the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) regulations. Where de-delegation has been agreed for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools, it is the Department's presumption that the LA will offer the service to those schools and academies in their area which are not

covered by the de-delegation. Academies will continue to receive a share of funding for these services in their delegated budget, and Academy Trusts will agree their own funding arrangements for similar services.

Main body of the Report

5. De-delegated services are for maintained schools only, and is not an option for academies, special schools, nursery schools or PRUs.
6. The funding for de-delegated services is allocated through the formula to maintained schools, but the agreed funding is then passed back for maintained mainstream primary and secondary schools with Schools Forum approval, so that the Local Authority can provide the service centrally.
7. Table 1 below sets out the current amount per pupil and provides an indication of the financial impact on a school for each de-delegated service.

Table 1:

De-delegation: Cost to a school	Specialist Education Services (SES)	Ethnic minorities & bilingual learners	Trade Union cover 24-25	Trade Union cover (proposed)	School Improvement Duties
Per Pupil	£12.18	£1.91	£1.50	£2.00	£6.56
Lump Sum - Primary					£1,000.00
Lump Sum - Secondary					£2,000.00
Primary School - pupil numbers					
100	£1,218	£191	£150	£200	£1,656
180	£2,192	£344	£270	£360	£2,181
210	£2,558	£401	£315	£420	£2,378
315	£3,837	£602	£473	£630	£3,066
630	£7,673	£1,203	£945	£1,260	£5,133
Secondary School - pupil numbers					
1200	£14,616	£2,292	£1,800	£2,400	£9,872

8. Table 2 below summarises the current DSG budgets for de-delegated services. These budgets reduce year on year due to pupil numbers reducing in maintained schools through academy conversions. The figure for 2025-26 is dependent on final maintained pupil numbers which will be known in December:

Table 2:

De-delegated Services Budgets:	2024-25
Specialist Education Services	£293,173
Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners	£52,004
Trade Union	£40,810
School Improvement Duties	£225,323
	£611,310

9. Schools' Forum members are required to agree the decision to de-delegate the budget on an annual basis. For 2025-26, the recommendation is to retain the same level of per pupil funding for the services, other than for Trade Union activity for which an increase is sought.

10. Each respective service is described in the attached annexes and includes the cost per pupil, an explanation of the benefits of the service, the impact if Schools Forum do not agree the funding, how the expenditure will be monitored and how the impact of the proposal will be evaluated.

11. Schools' Forum members for primary maintained schools and secondary maintained school must decide separately for each phase whether a service should be de-delegated.

Annex A

DSG DE-DELEGATED PROPOSAL 2025-26		
Title of proposal	Trade Unions	
Contact name & job title:	Contact tel:	Contact email:
Julia Grainger – Interim Assistant Director (Education, Skills & Learning)	01473 263942	Julia.grainger@suffolk.gov.uk
Annual budget £	2024-25 (for information)	2025-26
	£40,810	TBC
Which phase does this support?	Primary	Secondary
	√	√
Amount per pupil £	Primary	Secondary
	£2 per pupil	£2 per pupil
What are the benefits of Schools Forum agreeing this proposal? (Please give details of the service provided).		
<p>The funding provides for regular meetings between the trades unions and the council negating the need for maintained schools to all make their own separate and individual trade union arrangements. The arrangement also assists the council and unions in discussion, about policy, local issues in relation to maintained schools and through frequent informal discussion allows issues and concerns to be addressed early.</p> <p>Retaining this arrangement supports in managing the risk of an additional burden of activity falling upon school individual maintained school leaders and governors. The collective arrangement has been in place for almost two decades and works well. The benefits of this proposal are also that Trade Unions and the council are able to proactively identify potential future issues and work together to support school leaders in addressing them and ensure a collaborative and joint approach. It enables the council to consult unions on matters relating to the whole schools' workforce and to consult teaching unions on matters affecting teachers</p> <p>The amount allocated per pupil for the facilities time budget has not increased in 9 years, when an increase of 66% was agreed. However, in the last 9 years the cost of schools to release their staff member has vastly increased (around 32.5% in pay and 59.5% pension contribution from Sep 2014 – Sep 2024). A cost of £1.50 per pupil allows a day rate of £170 which is now significantly less that the cost to schools of releasing their member of staff. Being able to increase the amount per pupil to £2 for all schools would allow a school to be</p>		

better reimbursed (£200 per day). The current payment being made by academy schools is £1.75 per pupil, which would also be increased to £2 per pupil.

The extra cost to a school would be more than covered by the extra payments a school can claim if a member of their staff becomes one of the union representatives, which could happen in any school.

As a comparison, Norfolk currently pay £2.63 per pupil, London ~£6.75, far more than the £2 proposed. When a teacher is released to aid Teacher training a £330 day rate is paid, and schools are charged at least £260 to pay a day rate supply teacher.

The shared Facilities Fund ensures that schools can access support from accredited trade union representatives from any Teaching Trade Union when needed. It pays for a small team of highly trained and experienced representatives from each Teaching Trade Union to visit schools and to attend meetings during the working school day. Payment into the Facilities Fund annually allows schools to access support easily at an early and informal stage. There have been many instances where issues have been resolved early and more formal steps such as grievances have been avoided. In some cases, having support from trained union representatives early has avoided some staff from going on long term sick; saving both the school money on cover and increasing the wellbeing of the staff member. This work has all been funded through the shared facilities fund.

The cost of £2 per pupil would enable the level of support to continue and for schools to be better financially recompensed for releasing their staff member for union duties.

What will be the impact if Schools Forum does not agree to this proposal? (Please explain the consequences for the funding and delivery of the service(s) provided if the request is not approved).

Schools will need to make their own arrangements for trade union membership and negotiations. It is likely that school leaders will need to undertake additional activities such as negotiating individual school arrangements with all of the teaching and staff unions which currently is facilitated by the LA.

Failure to pay into the shared facilities fund can result in a significant increase in costs to a school and workload for school leaders. Disciplinary, grievance and capability issues can escalate with cases far more likely to reach formal meetings and possibly employment tribunals. Without an increase to the amount per pupil, the trade unions will not be available to support to the same high level as previously. Schools will also have to face the increased financial cost of releasing their staff without adequate recompense.

How will the expenditure be monitored?

Monthly and quarterly budget reports

The expenditure is monitored against the budget on a regular basis to ensure it is being used as effectively as possible

How will the impact of the proposal be evaluated? (Please also include an equalities impact assessment for children or other people who have one or more of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010).

Headteachers themselves will need to decide upon the effectiveness of this arrangement although there is a high probability that if such an arrangement was not in place school leaders would need to undertake potentially significant additional work against a backdrop of existing heavy workloads.

Annex B

DSG DE-DELEGATED PROPOSAL 2025-2026		
Title of proposal	Local Authority School Improvement function statutory duties	
Contact name & job title:	Contact tel:	Contact email:
Julia Grainger – Interim Assistant Director (Education & Learning)	01473 263942	Julia.Grainger@suffolk.gov.uk
Annual budget £	2024-25	2025-26
	£225,323	TBC
Which phase does this support?	Primary	Secondary
	Yes	Yes
Amount per pupil £	Primary	Secondary
	£6.56	£6.56
	£1,000 block payment	£2,000 block payment
What are the benefits of Schools Forum agreeing this proposal? (Please give details of the service provided).		
<p>This paper sets out the detail of work which enables the council to fulfil its responsibilities including statutory responsibilities with respect to support for LA maintained schools.</p> <p>In January 2022 the DfE published the outcome of the consultation on the removal of the School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering grant, allocated to all local authorities (LA). This is the budget that has historically funded LA support and school improvement activities in maintained schools. This grant was removed in October 2022 from all LAs in England. Part of the DfE rationale for this is that this brings LA maintained school in line with academy schools who have their budgets top sliced to pay for MAT school improvement functions. The DfE deemed the Local Authority Monitoring and Brokering (LAMB) grant as unfair.</p> <p>To ensure that LAs remain adequately funded to exercise their statutory functions and intervention powers, the DfE gave LAs the power in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations to fund all school improvement activities, including core school improvement activities, via de delegation of funds from maintained schools' budget shares, with the agreement of their local schools forum or the Secretary of State. Eligible members of Schools forum voted in and approved the de delegation of funding from LA maintained schools for the last two financial years This means that we must now ask schools to fund the council's statutory work through de delegation for 2025/6.</p>		

The service funded by this resource enables the LA to fulfil its statutory roles and responsibilities which have not changed in spite of the removal of government funding. With respect to this service, the LA's statutory roles and responsibilities are to 'know' its schools; to secure education excellence and promote high standards. Please see guidance below for detail.

[Directors of children's services: roles and responsibilities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/directors-of-childrens-services-roles-and-responsibilities)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/13A>

The table below shows the context of schools and settings in Suffolk as at September 2024.

Phase	All Suffolk Schools	LA Maintained	Academies
Nursery	1	1	0
Infant	4	1	3
Primary	246	85	161
Junior	3	1	2
High	44	3	41
Special	14	1	13
PRU	10	1	9
Sixth Form Provision	2	0	2
Total	324	93	231

Joint working with LA maintained Headteachers and Governors has enabled closer collaboration and coproduction of strategies and ways of working, for example the implementation of the new School Improvement Engagement Model (SIEM) based on feedback from stakeholders. The SIEM was implemented in January 2024. Feedback from Headteachers has and will inform continuous review and refinement.

All 93 LA maintained schools and settings are supported through the strands of work detailed below.

1. School Improvement continuous conversations allows support to be personalised to the needs of each school at no additional cost to the school

In addition to fulfilling the LA's statutory roles and responsibilities, the work supported by this resource is designed to support school leaders including governors in all LA maintained schools in their leadership of improvement. The work focusses on where schools are in relation to realising their school's vision; secure their school's improvement; strong leadership and management; good quality education and strong pupil outcomes. By providing this resource through de delegated funding, this support is available for all schools and not impacted by schools' individual budgets as would be the case with a 'buy back' model.

Improvement support is provided through the deployment of Standards and Excellence Partners (SEPs) to all LA maintained schools with personalised agendas to meet the needs of each school. Visits throughout the year follow the model of a "continuous conversation' with links between visits. There are at least two visits to every LA maintained school every term throughout the year. The Standards and Excellence Partners also discuss with school leaders any additional support and work with other teams that will assist their improvement work and make links with other teams.

The work uses a wide and comprehensive range of evidence including first hand evidence and national, published benchmarks such as the Education Inspection Framework and reference to teacher and headteacher standards to ensure strong impact. In addition, evidence-based practice and research such as EEF resources are used in supportive conversations around next steps and planning for improvement, identifying options and using what is seen to have worked elsewhere and sign posting to effective practice or learning from research or other schools. The visits also contribute to identifying practice or strengths to share wider than other schools may benefit from.

The benefit of this service is the support for and impact of work to ensure accurate self-evaluation; strong planning for improvement; effective monitoring processes and evaluation of the impact of school improvement actions with a focus on the future trajectory in relation to Ofsted inspections and statutory assessments.

This service focuses on all aspects of leadership and management and the quality of education including leadership of school improvement; the extent to which governing boards carry out their core functions; safeguarding; inclusion; outcomes for all pupils and groups of pupils including those pupils with SEND.

The School Improvement Engagement Model (SIEM) makes explicit the different entitlements of support. It enables school leaders to plan, with LA officers, additional activity to support them in their leadership of improvement and ensure all schools experience the benefit of an LA officer as part of the team securing their schools improvement. Additional support where schools meet the criteria will also include health checks, in areas such as safeguarding, finance, governance and assessment. These are coordinated by the Standards and Excellence Partner in liaison with other LA teams. Headteacher performance management adviser support from a SEP or RLE is provided for schools who meet the criteria for this support.

When there are significant changes in legislation, the Standards and Excellence Team support school leaders including governors with a summary of the changes and facilitate opportunities to discuss this. For example, the Ofsted inspection handbook changed in September 2024 and a summary document was produced. This is being shared and discussed at headteacher and governor network meetings. The team will continue to support school leaders with their leadership towards inspection bearing in mind these changes and any future changes too, bearing in mind discussions about report cards and a greater focus on Inclusion.

2. Additional engagement

As set out in the DfE 'Schools Causing Concern' guidance LAs are expected to intervene where LA maintained schools meet the criteria for a Warning Notice. These include unacceptably low standards; breakdown of Leadership and governance; safety of pupils.

Ofsted and the DfE are notified when the LA has issued a Warning notice.

In Suffolk, our approach is to work proactively with school leaders where additional support for improvement is needed. This approach identifies risk early and responds to prevent the risk of decline and of meeting these criteria. The service provided by this resource ensures all schools who are eligible access this intensive higher level of support at no additional cost to the school beyond the delegated resource. This process has contributed to preventing LA maintained schools being judged inadequate or RI and achieving low standards. (see impact below)

Schools will continue to be supported where there are risks of low standards; Ofsted decline or challenges in leadership and governance through additional support in the 'School Improvement Engagement Model' as seen in the diagram above. The model will maintain fluidity, a proactive 'future looking' perspective and be evidence based.

The LA does not have powers of intervention in academies.

The deployment of Standards and Excellence Partners to all individual LA maintained schools enables a point of contact for all LA maintained schools and teams within the LA which support joint working and the 'team around the child or school' working effectively together. This may include, for example, joint work and visits between the Inclusion team and Standards and Excellence Partners.

3. Using Knowledge of effective practice across the county and Sign posting to practice

With the wide range of strong practice, high pupil standards and learning that is identified through visits, the ability to sign post school leaders to learn from and with other schools and to benefit from practice is able to be utilised. Officers can sign post to where leaders may make links and visits and share learning with others. This means that school leaders and school staff are able to benefit from the learning of colleagues from other schools through visits to see provision and initiatives in practice, factors that have supported improvement and also virtually through discussion. When helpful, visits to other schools can be supported by SEPs to help maximise thinking on how practice seen might transfer to the visiting school.

4. Supporting school leaders including governors to establish, facilitate and run Networks so that leaders including governors of every LA maintained school are connected, benefit from learning, relationships and joint working with other schools and not isolated in their work.

This resource is used to facilitate groups of school leaders working together to facilitate joined up working across the county, between LA maintained schools so that school leaders including governors are connected and benefit from collaboration. This also means that school leaders with common priorities or areas of focus are able to be brought together to solve issues together. The intended impact of this is that no LA maintained school leader will be isolated in their work and all will be able to benefit from the learning, experiences and support of others. There are a range of networks that have been developed across the county including the Executive Headteacher network; Headteachers in the East / Coastal area; the IP12 group; LA maintained HTs in the West; LA maintained network in Lowestoft and the North of the county; Central steering group of Headteachers and a county wide network for leaders of 'small schools'.

Governance is also a key part of this strand with opportunities for governors to network in online sessions; links made between governing bodies; support for governors through facilitating mentors and developing smaller governor networks. This is still an important strand of work to focus on as there are some parts of the county where networks are still to be developed, or additional networks to develop with different areas of focus and also further requests for more networks.

5. This resource is also used to work with the LA maintained steering group to facilitate conferences, networks, CPD and events for LA maintained school leaders.

In response to Headteachers sharing the need for greater opportunities for networking and coming together as a group of LA maintained school leaders, this resource has supported further development of this work. It is used to facilitate groups of school leaders working together to facilitate joined up working between LA maintained schools across the county, so that school leaders including governors are connected and benefit from collaboration. LA officers have worked with the LA maintained Headteacher steering group to collaboratively arrange events including conferences and opportunities for CPD for LA maintained school Headteachers. Events have been held each term in the academic years 2022-23 and 2023-4. There is much support to continue to arrange a range of opportunities.

School leaders with common priorities or areas of focus are brought together to solve issues together. The intended impact of this is that no LA maintained school leader will be isolated in their work and all will be able to benefit from the learning, experiences and support of others. As mentioned above, there are a range of networks that have been developed across the county including the Executive Headteacher network, a county wide network for leaders of 'small schools', Headteachers in; the IP12 group, the East / Coastal area, Ipswich, the West, Lowestoft and the North of the county; and Central and South Suffolk.

Governance is also a key part of this strand with opportunities for governors to network in online sessions. These meet approximately termly. Agendas are driven by the needs of the attendees and local and national developments around governance.

Links are made between governing bodies as well as support for governors through facilitating mentors and developing smaller governor networks.

6. Leadership Opportunities

This resource is used to work with school leaders to support their professional development and potential career and succession planning as well as taking a collaborative approach where additional leadership capacity may be needed in schools.

Officers have worked with LA maintained school leaders to introduce on a collaborative model where additional leadership capacity is needed. As a result, a cohort of potential interim leaders has been established and had the opportunity to take up interim posts in other schools, also providing opportunities for leaders in their schools to take on interim roles and responsibilities. Further developments are underway to implement a 'team support' approach following successful trialling. This will also be developed to extend opportunities for wider leadership development for other roles in schools.

In addition to this, Leadership bitesize topics have been run throughout 2024 and will be continued in 2025. These take place for both Headteachers and governors on a range of topics designed to support leadership. They are online sessions, which last from 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

A Growing Leaders pilot also began in the summer term 2024, to support senior leaders who may wish to consider moving towards headship, or to further develop their leadership skills. This gives leaders the opportunity to work alongside and shadow others for their own professional development.

7. Headteacher induction support

As part of the County wide induction for Headteachers in new posts in all Suffolk schools, Headteachers new to posts in LA maintained schools have the opportunity to attend professional development induction sessions provided by this resource. They are also offered mentors, pairing with experienced Suffolk LA maintained headteachers during their first year of headship in Suffolk. Many of these relationships develop into longer-term collaborations. In the coming year, inviting aspirant headteachers to selected induction sessions will be explored as a means of providing leadership development and de-mystifying the headteacher role.

Impact Benefits to date

The impact of the service contribution is that children and young people in all Suffolk LA maintained schools are supported to receive a high-quality education through supporting for the school leaders of their schools and settings.

School leaders including governors are supported in their work, personalised to reflect their schools' unique characteristics.

The impact can also be seen in Inspection outcomes. The table below shows the % schools judged good or better at their most recent Ofsted inspection. This analysis will reflect the changes to Ofsted reporting going forward and the end of single word judgements.

	Dec 2022	April 2023	Aug 2023	Dec 2023	April 2024	Aug 2024
National (England)	89%	88%	89%	89%	90%	90%
Suffolk-All Schools	86%	87%	86%	86%	88%	89%
Suffolk- LA maintained	96%	98%	97%	93%	94%	94%

Suffolk has narrowed the gap (in percentage of schools judged good or better) to national figures from 3% to 1% since December 2022

The % schools judged outstanding are shown in the table below.

	October 2022	August 2023	August 2024
National (England)	18%	16%	14%
Suffolk-All Schools	12%	11%	10%
Suffolk- LA maintained	18%	17%	14%

The service impact to date is also reflected in provisional KS2 outcomes with support for school leaders to ensure the quality of provision meets pupils' needs and to fulfil the aspiration that leaders hold for their pupils. The data shows an improving picture in Suffolk but there is still more work to do to ensure Suffolk children achieve as well as children nationally and to work with leaders to prevent underachievement in their schools.

Provisional 2024 Suffolk performance information (2024 national data set not finalised)			
Measure	Suffolk 2024 (2022)	National 2024 (2022)	Gap to National 2024 (2022)
RWM EXS+	58 (54)	60 (59)	+3 (from -5 to -2)
Reading EXS+	73 (72)	74 (75)	+2 (from -3 to -1)
Writing EXS+	70 (63)	72 (69)	+3 (from -5 to -2)
Maths EXS+	70 (68)	73 (71)	0 (from -3 to -3)

Areas for Future development

Continue to work with the LA maintained school Headteacher steering group to ensure our work is adapted and refined continually to secure improvement and support LA school leaders with their work.

- Ensure that the SIEM is implemented to a consistently high standard so that every LA maintained school receives the appropriate entitlement of support.
- Develop a full programme of Bitesize development opportunities for governors.
- Evaluate the Growing Leaders Pilot and then further develop the programme based on findings.
- Work with the LA maintained school Headteacher steering group to support induction and network for deputy Headteacher and aspiring leaders
- Develop the use of coaching for school leaders. A number of LA officers have trained as coaches and completed the ILM level 5 accreditation.
- Further develop networks so that leaders including governors in schools in all parts of the county, are able to link with others in a range of collaborative groups.

What will be the impact if Schools Forum does not agree to this proposal? (Please explain the consequences for the funding and delivery of the service(s) provided if the request is not approved).

- As set out in DfE guidance, if this is not approved LA would need to go to secretary of state to appeal this decision.
- The LA would not be able to fulfil its statutory responsibilities
- School improvement support would be impacted as schools would need to buy in their school improvement support which would be an impact on schools' budgets at a time when these are fully stretched as a result of the fuel costs and pay awards. As a result, pupils and leaders in some schools would not have access to school improvement support.
- The risk of decline would not be mitigated as the proactive approach would not be consistent or guaranteed for all schools
- School leaders would feel isolated in their work and not benefit from networks or partnership collaborative working.
- Suffolk children and young people may not receive a good or better education to move on to the next phase of their education with the skills and knowledge needed to access the next stage.
- The LA would have limited evidence to monitor and know its schools. It would be limited to 'understand the performance of LA maintained schools' DfE Schools Causing Concern, based on published performance information. This would result in decisions to intervention being reactive and not proactive. Therefore, intervention may not be a comprehensive or accurate picture of the current quality of education.

How will the expenditure be monitored?

- Monthly and quarterly budget reports
- Line manager 1:1 meeting
- Monthly Education Skills & Learning leadership meetings

How will the impact of the proposal be evaluated? (Please also include an equalities impact assessment for children or other people who have one or more of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010).

- % good or better judgements for LA maintained schools compared to national in line with Ofsted reporting and the changes to the Ofsted framework
- Pupil outcomes at all key stages- comparison to national and national LA; average; range and profile.
- QA of the team's work from joint visits and report QA
- Feedback from school leaders.

Annex C

DSG DE-DELEGATED PROPOSAL 2025-2026		
Title of proposal	Support to underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners	
Contact name & job title:	Contact tel:	Contact email:
Julia Grainger – Interim Assistant Director (Education, Skills & Learning)	01473 263942	Julia.grainger@suffolk.gov.uk
Annual budget £	2024-25 (for information)	2025-26
	£44,388	TBC
Which phase does this support?	Primary	Secondary
	Yes	Yes
Amount per pupil £	Primary	Secondary
	£1.91	£1.91
What are the benefits of Schools Forum agreeing this proposal? (Please give details of the service provided).		
<p>Suffolk County Council use this resource to provide targeted support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils who live in the county, supporting them to overcome the barriers to accessing school through the work of a Gypsy Roma & Traveller Education Liaison Officer.</p> <p>The complexities and interwoven factors that impact on educational engagement and achievement of this group of pupils is significant. The GRT Education Liaison Officer works with school leaders and staff and also families to promote and develop an inclusive culture that welcomes all communities, promotes high expectations and is committed to forging strong engagement from parents and families.</p> <p>To facilitate this work, our GRT Education Liaison Officer carries out visits to families on sites and encampments, works with early years settings, as well as school leaders, Educational Welfare Officers and the Admissions team to ensure the swift application and enrolment and ongoing attendance of GRT pupils in Suffolk schools.</p> <p>Nationally and historically, pupils from Gypsy and Traveller backgrounds underachieve, are more likely to have SEND and have poor and interrupted educational experience. In Suffolk 2024 , the summer census data indicates that 21% are identified as having SEND.</p> <p>Provisional outcomes in 2024 show that, in Suffolk at key stage two, 22% achieved the expected standard in reading writing and maths combined.</p> <p>At key stage 4 in 2023, 17.2% of GRT pupils achieved grade 4 or above in maths and English and 3.4% for GRT pupils achieved grades 5-9.</p>		

This illustrates the need to support GRT children and young people and schools who educate them.

Research from the Education Policy Institute (EPI) suggests that GRT pupils are, on average, almost 3 years behind White British pupils (by 34.1 months) by the end of secondary schooling. Travellers of Irish Heritage are 28.9 months behind white British pupils. Despite this gap, in Suffolk, their performance, although is widely variable, is often higher than their peers nationally and has improved in recent years.

Overall numbers of GRT have increased from 665 in 2022 to 753 in 2024. Within this there has been a rise in European Roma pupils. The GRT Liaison Officer is developing and strengthening her to work with these growing communities. She has been involved in bespoke project work with an LA high school and facilitated links to Roma Support groups to raise aspirations for Roma girls. Many Roma pupils have not accessed schooling until entering the U.K. Their understanding of the culture of education in England needs addressing with families at the outset as their prior experience is vastly different to the majority of families and building confidence in our systems and with education settings is vital. Almost all have English as an additional language (EAL) and many with their first language being spoken word only, thus presenting specific challenges in relation to the teaching of literacy.

A notable success of this work continues to be the high percentage of GRT pupils attending early years settings and schools, including some continuing into secondary education. An area of focus with the GRT Education Liaison Officer continues to be maintaining a robust database of GRT pupils in Suffolk settings, working with school leaders and health and support services to ensure the LA has an accurate view of the extent of support and the level of need. Through this work, trust is built with the GRT families. They are encouraged to declare their status and enrol their children in local schools. Regular, timely and effective communication between the GRT Education Liaison Officer and the receiving school ensures better preparation to receive a child and therefore builds understanding and confidence between all stakeholders. The link between attendance and achievement for families is sensitively strengthened, with parents treated as equal partners. The risk of children missing education is therefore minimised. Absence rates for pupils have seen improvements: 17.4% absence in 2022-2023, 15% absence in 2023-2024.

GRT pupils nationally are over-represented in pupils being electively home educated (EHE) and not in school, often likely to leave formal education at the end of Key Stage 2. In Suffolk, records show over 2.6% are recorded as Gypsy Roma and 0.2% Traveller of Irish heritage. This has dropped since 2022 where it was approximately 4%. However, this is due to the fact that the overall EHE cohort has grown. We do know that this figure is likely to be higher as this group are reluctant to disclose their background to the Local Authority. The work of the GRT Engagement Officer continues to support the EHE Team to increase effective engagement with GRT families and to build trusting relationships so that the group are more likely to disclose their GRT background. This joint work between officers ensures GRT families have an accurate understanding of EHE, have access to the support and resources they require to make an informed decision about educational provision, and are therefore more likely to access an appropriate education and also re-engage into mainstream education. It is of particular importance in the current climate as EHE rates have continued to increase since covid and show very little sign of reducing.

The second strand for this resource is to be used to ensure school leaders are supported in meeting the needs of the EAL pupils who attend their settings, through opportunities for joint collaborative working; sharing strategies; working together on new approaches and access to research and new initiatives. It is essential to ensure no school leader feels isolated in their drive to ensure provision meets the needs of this vulnerable group of learners. EAL pupils need to quickly develop skills which enable them to access more formal qualifications. This improves their integration into life in the UK, maximising their

skills, opportunities, and prospects. This way they are likely to make a significant contribution to the workplace and to society in this country. An increasingly significant number of pupils with EAL continue to arrive in the UK, part way through their schooling. The number of Suffolk schools welcoming pupils with EAL also continues to increase. Over the past six years the number of EAL pupils recorded has risen from 8.7% of pupil population in Suffolk to 11.1%.

This number does not give a true representation of the EAL population as these communities are often not forthcoming in identifying their children as EAL. The number of refugees and unaccompanied asylum seekers within this figure is increasing and is predicted to continue to increase as a direct impact of the situation in Ukraine and the middle east. This is further evidence to support working with these families building professional trusting relationships as many will arrive having experienced trauma from being displaced.

This resource has ensured that schools, wherever they are on their EAL journey, can access support to further improve outcomes for pupils with EAL. This is being achieved through the facilitation of school-to-school support through provision of a network of EAL expertise, which includes: Countywide EAL Network Meetings held half termly which have proved invaluable as schools have been navigating issues such as refugee support, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children, attendance, funding; Signposting and facilitating connections to relevant services and resources such as Ipswich Opportunity Area team, Suffolk Refugee Support, ISCRE; Supporting schools to take part in projects that pilot new and innovative ways of improving outcomes for EAL pupils. Feedback from headteachers on a recent survey highlighted that the links, discussions, sharing of resources and sign posting at the EAL Network was incredibly valuable.

During the academic year 2023-2024 the number of EAL pupils in Local Authority maintained schools who have directly benefitted from the work supported by this resource is approximately 1408 pupils. In addition, a great many more children and young people have been impacted through the sharing of effective practice; school to school support and trialling new initiatives supported through this resource.

It is proposed that this resource be allocated to enable schools to be best placed to support the needs of this growing cohort, develop and share expertise and improve practice so that all Suffolk pupils, regardless of their school setting and English language level, achieve their full potential.

The support and challenge of the Standards and Excellence team will ensure that school leaders, including governors, are evaluating the impact of actions on improving the outcomes of all vulnerable groups. Officers will work with school leaders to support/challenge them to ensure the curriculum provision in their schools is well planned and constructed to meet the needs of all pupils, including those who have EAL. They will work to support and challenge where needed so that curriculums are inclusive.

The work of the Standards and Excellence team will include a focus on ensuring school leaders, including governors, have access to advice and support regarding the EAL cohort, through this resource. Where the needs of specific groups of pupils are not well met, officers will challenge this with leaders to bring about improvement.

What will be the impact if Schools Forum does not agree to this proposal? (Please explain the consequences for the funding and delivery of the service(s) provided if the request is not approved).

- GRT children would arrive in schools and settings where support would have to be sought from other schools. More enquiries from these communities would be directed at school and settings putting extra demands on leaders and staff. Messages and support offered might lack consistency and vary in effectiveness.
- Reduced application and attendance of GRT pupils at school and nursery, leading to poorer outcomes at all key stages. Increased percentage of pupils who are electively

home educated, potentially impacting on adult literacy and numeracy skills which lead to limiting adult career choices. In addition, if this cohort of pupils are not in school, they do not have the protective factors of schools surrounding them leaving them more vulnerable to safeguarding concerns.

- Increased percentage of GRT pupils who leave current school to be electively home educated and potentially impacting on NEET (not in employment, education or training) figures.
- The understanding trust building and strengthening of GRT community links would diminish reducing the likelihood of positive working relationships and integration into school communities
- Outcomes and progress for pupils with EAL would be at risk of continuing to vary widely across Suffolk, with pupils from some schools significantly underachieving, potentially impacting on onward journeys, career and life opportunities; pockets of poor social mobility and inequalities would increase.
- School leaders may lack confidence and be isolated in their work to ensure provision meets the needs of EAL pupils.
- The opportunities to share what has worked and implement new initiatives would be diminished.
- The broader network of support and momentum gained in the school-to-school support and sharing of good practice/networking would be impacted and diminished.

How will the expenditure be monitored?

- Monthly and quarterly budget reports
- Line manager 1:1 meeting – strategic leads
- Monthly Education, Skills & Learning leadership meetings
- Impact monitoring of the School Improvement Engagement Model
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How will the impact of the proposal be evaluated? (Please also include an equalities impact assessment for children or other people who have one or more of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010).

- Achievement evidence will be analysed to evaluate the impact on reducing the attainment gap between underperforming ethnic groups and bilingual learners and their peers.
- Attendance evidence will be analysed to evaluate the impact on reducing absence rates, including persistent and severe absence rates.
- Officers will follow up in their conversations with school leaders to monitor the impact of school-to-school support on improving the quality of provision for EAL learners and to develop sharing of good practice through locality plans. This will be documented in visits from Local Authority Officers.
- Feedback from School leaders will be sought to confirm that they have access to appropriate resources to improve outcome for pupils with EAL.

Annex D

DSG DE-DELEGATED PROPOSAL 2024 - 25		
Title of proposal	Specialist Education Services (SES)	
Contact name & job title:	Contact tel:	Contact email:
Izzy Connell	07540673775	Izzy.Connell@suffolk.gov.uk
De-delegated Annual budget £	2023-24 (for information)	2024-25
	£292,978	TBC
Which phase does this support?	Primary	Secondary
	yes	yes
Amount per pupil £	Primary	Secondary
	£12.18	£12.18
What are the benefits of Schools Forum agreeing this proposal? (Please give details of the service provided).		
<u>Overview</u>		
<p>The Specialist Education Services (SES) are aligned to the areas of need as detailed in the SEND Code of Practice. The specialist teams have a broad core offer, from support at whole school level; looking at universal and targeted provision across the school and across the area of need, and individual pupil-level support. Additionally, there is a Whole School Inclusion (WSI) Service, supporting whole school approaches to SEND and Inclusion. The WSI service consists of Specialist Teachers to support SENCOs and the leadership of SEND in schools. This includes bespoke packages of support for new SENCOs – new to role and/or new to Suffolk.</p>		
<p>Since January 2024, SES have created a more defined offer for children and young people (CYP) with an EHCP – namely, Section F visits. These are designed to support schools in implementing the provision outlined in Section F of a CYP’s EHCP. The bespoke visits also support signposting to other relevant services within SCC and externally to ensure a wide understanding of the provision required to meet need. These visits are also used effectively to support transition at key points, particularly Year 6 into Year 7.</p>		
<p>In addition, we have been supporting specialist units attached to mainstream schools with their ‘whole setting’ approaches, as well as now accepting bespoke individual referrals for pupils in the units (since September 2024).</p>		
<p>The above in mind, the proposal this time is to request resource for the following Specialist Education Services: Communication and Interaction; Speech, Language and Communication Needs; SEMH; Cognition and Learning (including Specific Learning Difficulties) and Whole School Inclusion.</p>		

The proposed allocation of funds from the DSG de-delegated fund is essential to the overall funding of the above services this year. The benefits to agreeing this proposal are:

- Schools will continue to receive support for SEND, with a focus on supporting the universal and targeted offer in mainstream schools and classrooms, as well as for individual pupils with SEND across all these areas of need, through modelling strategies and interventions, advice, guidance, and training. This includes support to identify SEND through the Assess, Plan, Do, Review, process as well as provide support for those CYP on the SEND register, at SEND Support and with an EHCP – the latter including those CYP attending a specialist unit within a mainstream school (all of whom will have an EHCP).
- All mainstream schools will continue to be able to access free training from each of the above services, as well as lower cost options to support early intervention and to provide access to the wider staff within schools. This is in addition to the more bespoke traded offer.
- Schools will continue to have access to advice and guidance from the specialist SES teams at the point of earliest intervention, including via Inclusion Support Meetings (ISMs) and Solution Circles – the latter being a joint offer from across SES and Psychology and Therapeutic Services.
- Schools will continue to have access to advice and guidance from a specialist SES teacher for whole school inclusion issues and inclusive practice, via the Whole School Inclusion Service. This includes packages of support for new SENCoS, support for CYP with an EHCP at key transition points and working to support the Inclusion Quality Mark in Suffolk schools.
- There will continue to be a countywide SENCo Forum to facilitate networking and to provide training and information. In addition, all schools can access a half-termly 'Community Inclusion Forum' to support networking and to provide updates and information from across the SEND system, with a focus on local issues and local challenges. The Community Inclusion Forums will include representatives from SES, Psychology and Therapeutic Services, health teams, including school nursing and mental health teams and Family Support Practitioners.

The information below serves to report on the **impact of SES** over the last year and is reflective of the on-going aims of SES in supporting schools and settings:

- Inclusion Support Meetings (ISMs) are a part of the SES universal offer to enable access to earlier advice and guidance, without the need to refer. The ISMs have continued, now across all of the services and the broad areas of need, including the Whole School Inclusion Service and the Education Access Team for those children and young people vulnerable to permanent exclusion. During the course of 2023/24 SES undertook 1552 ISMs across 212 mainstream schools (an increase from 1259 in 2022/23). Feedback from schools has been overwhelmingly positive, with 96% of schools reporting that the ISM has been helpful or very helpful in increasing confidence, skills and knowledge in meeting a learner's needs.
- The Education Access Team have held 139 Education Access Support Meetings (EASMs) since November 2023 for children that were at immediate risk of permanent exclusion. As a result of these EASMs permanent exclusion was avoided for 81 children

and schools were signposted to other support. Of the 58 that were subsequently issued with a permanent exclusion, 28 were rescinded.

- In terms of bespoke individual pupil-level work: 87% of schools surveyed reported that they had a better understanding of need. 92% reported a greater confidence in meeting the CYP's needs. For Section F visits these figures were 83% and 75% respectively against the same measures
- In terms of the support provided at 'whole school' level: 100% of schools who responded to evaluations shared that the support had increased both their knowledge and their confidence in meeting the needs of CYP with SEND.
- 99% of schools surveyed following Solution Circles report the intervention was helpful or very helpful in supporting CYP.

Some quotes from schools taken from completed evaluations for ISMs:

- *Lots of great ideas to support the pupil which were all emailed through on the same day so I can start supporting him as soon as possible. Lots of great suggestions that can be easily implemented.*
- *Concise and supportive advice, practical and quickly accessible for a busy SENCo*
- *Clear and helpful advice that will have an impact. Next steps for us were identified whilst also acknowledging what we had managed to achieve. I don't think we should underestimate the power of these sessions as support for Sencos.*

And for bespoke individual pupil-level work:

- *We have managed to reduce the number of times our young person is dysregulated and is able to spend more time accessing tasks/activities.'*
- *The learner is now engaging in a structured literacy intervention and voiced that xxx 'likes it most of the time and that 'it helps with my brain and reading'. The pupil 'sees and feels like they are making progress' in response to the newly modelled and implemented structured intervention approaches.*
- *H is now in school full time and is happy, safe and learning. He is no longer at risk of exclusion. Staff feel equipped and confident in supporting xxx. H is responding well to the change in strategies.*
- *It's always really useful to be advised on evidenced interventions and schemes of work etc. We are purchasing the books for our unit, they'll not only support the child who is in there now, but also many of the other students with similar profiles.*

And for whole school-level support:

- *We now use advice given across KS1 and other teachers have also said how helpful this has been. Thank you for a perfect balance of practical suggestions and guidance, we feel we*

understand our SEND children more and have some really useful new tools to help even after such a short time. Thank you!

- We now have a range of different resources and techniques to support children's writing, alongside more knowledge and understanding of how to move on learners who appear stuck.***
- Children have an environment that meets their needs. They are aware of their emotions and due to the strategies/resources provided have become more self-regulated and ready to learn.***

And for Solution Circles:

- The solution circle has already made a huge difference as we have put some of the ideas in place after the session. The other suggestions will support our case and have an impact across the school as others can benefit from it also.***
- I can say that the 1½ hours I have spent in two Solution Circles is the most productive 1½ hours I have spent talking about children in a long time.***
- A fantastic well-timed meeting to discuss cases brought forward. Panel of professionals discuss and solve issues raised with follow ups. This is an excellent way of schools having access to a team of experts. I highly recommend this to all schools.***

What will be the impact if Schools Forum does not agree to this proposal? (Please explain the consequences for the funding and delivery of the service(s) provided if the request is not approved).

If this proposal is not agreed there will be the following impact:

The offer of support to schools and their pupils will be significantly reduced and this may:

- be detrimental to outcomes for pupils with SEND across Suffolk
- be detrimental to supporting inclusive practice in schools across Suffolk
- be detrimental to the support for SENCos, including networking opportunities and training
- increase pressure on the High Needs Block funding as more children and young people may require alternative or specialist provision. This would mean there would be a need to ask schools' forum to move more funds into high needs block as there would be more demand for specialist places.
- Suffolk County Council will be less able to fulfil its strategic commitment to establish an early intervention service to improve outcomes for SEND pupils in Suffolk.
-

How will the expenditure be monitored?

All Inclusion Services budgets are scrutinised on a monthly basis and this budget is part of this process.

If required this budget will be presented to the High Needs Working Group when they meet. Monitoring will take place alongside the evaluation of the impact of the service.

How will the impact of the proposal be evaluated? (Please also include an equalities impact assessment for children or other people who have one or more of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010).

We measure impact in the following ways:

- Pupil progress is measured using a scaled approach – Core Offer Progress Statements (COPS). Whilst this is across SES, each service will analyse this data based on key indicators pertinent to the area of need. This allows us to look at the sometimes very small steps of progress made by some CYP with more complex profiles of need.
- Case studies are completed by each Specialist Teacher biannually describing SES involvement and impact.
- All CPD delivered to schools is evaluated.
- All schools and parents are asked to complete an evaluation post-intervention. For schools we track responses related to improved knowledge and understanding in meeting needs, as well as increased confidence in meeting needs. For parents, we track how well they feel listened to by our service and feel involved in the co-production of the planning for their child.
- In addition, we 're-visit' a percentage of schools where we have undertaken work at both whole school and individual pupil level. In so doing, we discuss with the school and evaluate the sustained impact of our support over time, re-visiting after approximately 2 terms of ending our support.
- Evaluations are also sent out following Inclusion Support Meetings and Solution Circles.
- There is an annual survey to schools asking for feedback more widely on the scope and quality of the offer and whether or not, as a result of SES input, there is more confidence in meeting the needs of CYP with SEND.