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Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

This edition of our weekly news bulletin has a rather financial flavour. This reflects that we have reached this key moment in the academic year and there is now an intensity in our budget setting as we move towards our Thursday 4 June deadline. I appreciate that setting balanced budgets is a very great challenge and necessitates some difficult decisions. It can be tempting to see this in purely negative terms. You might be familiar with the French political aphorism: ‘to govern is to choose’. Making difficult choices is an integral and unavoidable dimension of our leadership. What we do in both leadership and governance is to ensure that we make these choices rationally and that our budgets serve our greatest priorities rather than just sustaining the status quo.

In the context of the Trust, we have significant support for Headteachers in navigating this difficult terrain. Our line management processes and Central Finance Team, especially for SLA primary schools, can bring challenge and suggestions. In governance our LGBs will scrutinise our plans to ensure that our priority pupils are served first. When we can’t see a way forward, we have colleagues who can support. We are currently consulting on a mechanism (the Support Fund) to give us a bit more flexibility in those situations where the solution can’t be found within the school. I wouldn’t dare suggest that the difficulties of balancing budgets in 2026 is a positive experience, but it is the task that we have trained for and can deliver as a whole Trust. Please ask for support as you need it.

Lastly on finances, our story as a Trust is a positive one. Our talented teams, structures and disciplines have put us in a position where we have modest reserves. We have faced previous and similar challenges with success, and we can do it again.

In other news I would like to welcome Jo Trickett, who has joined Horfield CofE Primary this week as Interim Headteacher until the end of this academic year. We look forward to formally introducing Jo at the Headteachers’ Meeting next week. I would like to thank Richard Riordan for the support he has been offering the SLT at Horfield over the past few months. His support is a clear example of our values of working in partnership and professional generosity. Finally, congratulations to David Kooyman who has secured the substantive Headship position at Easton CE Primary School. David has a vocation to serve that community, and I am sure that he will maintain the school’s progress and development.

As ever,

Gary Lewis, Chief Executive Officer



Upcoming LSP Headteachers' Meeting

A reminder that the next LSP Headteachers' Meeting will take place on **Thursday 7 May, 8.30am - 12.30pm** at Nailsea Baptist Church (BS48 2DS).

[Click here](#) to view the agenda.

Draft LSP Term Dates 2027-28

[Click here](#) to view the proposed Term Dates which would apply to all LSP schools for the 2027-2028 academic year.

These are the same as the dates for both BANES and Bristol Local Authorities. North Somerset have not outlined their dates (as almost all of their schools are academies).

These term dates allow for a full week at the end of Term 6 which is always a positive for pupil attendance.

If you have any comments/views you would like to be considered on the dates that are being proposed for LSP schools in 2027-28 please email enquiries@lsp.org.uk with your thoughts by **3.30pm on Friday 8 May**.

Operations Team Meeting for School Business Managers and Officer Managers

Thank you to all of the School Business Managers and Office Managers that were able to attend the Operations Team meeting on Monday 27 April. Please [click here to view](#) topics discussed.

Please accept my apologies for failing to record the meeting. I will try to make sure that I don't forget in the future!

Louise Malik, Chief Financial and Operating Officer



Draft Budgets for the three-year period starting in 2026-27

Thank you to all of you for your work on producing draft budgets for the next three-year period by Tuesday 21 April. Overall, the draft budgets show a projected deficit in 2026-27 of £707k and just over £2.5m for 2027-28. This time last year we were projecting deficits of over £6m for 2026-27 and over £10m for 2027-28. The improvement has not happened by accident; it has happened because of all of your hard work and innovation as you have reviewed your budgets. We recognise that this has not been easy and many of you will have taken very difficult decisions. You have, however, put us in the strongest possible position to continue to deliver to our students and communities at a time of enormous financial challenge - thank you.

Unfortunately, our challenges are ongoing and you will all be aware of the deadline of Thursday 4 June to have set balanced in year budgets for 2026-27 and 2027-28, as far as possible. Without further action our Trust wide reserves will reduce from the forecast of 7% at the end of this financial year to 6% then 3% and then into the red as we progress each year through to the end of the 2028-29 financial year. This is in the context of our Reserves Policy with a 'reserves target' of between 3% and 5% at both individual school and overall Trust level.

Our pupil numbers are forecast to continue falling with an overall reduction of nearly 6% projected in our funded pupil numbers over the next three year period.

You will have seen in [last week's bulletin](#) that we have now issued our consultation on the operation of our new Support Fund. The consultation closes at 5.00pm on Friday 15 May and we would strongly encourage you to engage in this consultation. The Support Fund will be a key part of ensuring that we take the right steps to setting a sustainable budget, ensuring equity in provision and delivering our aims for our students and communities.

School Financial Benchmarking Comparisons for 2026-27 Budget Planning

All schools should undertake financial benchmarking to help schools see how they spend their money and the outcomes they achieve against other schools, and the DfE provides a tool to enable schools to do this. However, although we would still encourage schools to use the DfE tool, IMP also gives us some valuable KPIs to help support schools in the Trust with the budget setting process.

We have therefore prepared a comparison report for 2026-27 and 2027-28 using the initial draft budget in IMP (as at 23 April 2026). We appreciate that these are not yet finalised budgets (and there was no expectation that schools would have yet included any proposals to deliver an in-year balanced budget for 2027-28). However, the information provided may help inform your final budget preparation and prompt useful conversations with other schools in the Trust.

Continued...



School Financial Benchmarking Comparisons for 2026-27

Budget Planning *Continued...*

You will see data for both primary and secondary schools and, where possible, have added consolidated data for federations at the far right of each data set. This report is available to view [in Foldr: School Business Managers - Trust Wide - Information for 2026-27 Budgets - 2026-27 & 2027-28 IMP Benchmarking Reports - Primaries, Secondaries and Federations - Initial Draft Budgets](#)

We particularly recommend reviewing:

- KPI for Staff costs as a proportion of revenue income
- Pupil Adult Ratios (the number of children expressed per full time equivalent member of staff)
- I/E summary per pupil (per pupil income and expenditure levels across a range of categories), including a surplus or deficit per pupil

IMP RAG rates this data for you and also provides averages for primary and secondary schools.

The Central Finance Team will provide another comparison report based on the final draft budget deadline after Thursday 4 June.

Schools are also encouraged to review the [DfE Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool \(FBIT\) financial benchmarking and insights tool](#)

FBIT can be used by anyone working in a role relating to school resource management to:

- benchmark a school's spending against other similar schools
- identify areas for improvement and share best practice with other schools
- build a report to share analysis with governors and senior leadership

The report can be downloaded as a PDF, and we would encourage you to share the information with your governors. The summary report will highlight three areas for investigation along with the headline data. Please note that a red RAG rating is used to highlight when a spending profile is different to other similar schools and that good and outstanding schools are likely to have red RAG ratings for certain cost categories because they have a strategic spending model that prioritises certain area of spend. The DfE are not encouraging schools to become more average!

The tool can be useful to understand why your school is an outlier compared to similar or comparator schools and understand why your school may be spending more or less than others and see if there are areas which might need to change. You can and should drill down into cost categories when exploring your school's data.

If you wish to prepare your own report using the charts available, you simply click the 'Save an image' button and the image will appear in a download file.

We would recommend you watch a demonstration of the service, available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFdUvcw3r7Q>. The demonstration takes less than 15 minutes and explains how to use the information and how to drill down into the data.



Increase in Electricity Charges

From April 2026, non-commodity charges, such as Transmission Network Use of System (TNUoS), Targeted Charging Review (TCR) banding, and Industrial Emissions Intensity (EII) adjustments, have increased, in accordance with changes from Ofgem. These costs cover the charges for using the electricity network and are separate from the actual energy you consume. We are also seeing the cost of The Nuclear Regulated Asset Base (nRAB) levy, which is a mandatory UK government charge, introduced in November 2025, added to electricity bills to fund new nuclear projects.

Whilst we had been aware that these increases may affect us, we hadn't been informed by our supplier if they will be passing any of these non-commodity charges onto customers.

We were informed on Monday 27 April that there will be increases from Wednesday 6 May 2026, until the end of our contract with British Gas (30 September 2026).

We are working on the estimated cost for this and will update schools with what the increase charges mean for schools, and will share this in next week's Bulletin.

If you have any questions, then please [contact Steph Franklin, Sustainability Lead](#).





Upcoming Lighthouse Learning Sessions and CPD Networks

The full programme of Lighthouse Learning CPD on offer for 2025-26 can be found on the [LSP website](#).

DATE	EVENT	AUDIENCE
Wednesday 29 April 3.30 - 4.00pm	Secondary Raising Standards Network Online via Teams	Secondary Standards Leads
Wednesday 29 April 3.30 - 5.00pm	Secondary Maths and MFL Networks Natalie Wilcox to circulate Teams links directly	Secondary Maths & MFL Leads
Wednesday 30 April 3.30 - 5.00pm	Secondary English Network Natalie Wilcox to circulate Teams links directly	Secondary English Leads
Reminders of the Term 6 dates will follow in due course		

Reminder: Team Teach Training Sessions

We continue to work with Elementa to deliver accredited Team Teach Training over the coming months.

All training will be in the English Hub Building, St Peter's Primary School from 8.30 - 3.30pm (participants must attend for the whole session). Lunch will be provided and participants will need to stay on school site for the whole day.

The cost for each course is as follows and will be recharged to schools:

- Level 1: £117
- Level 2: £230

We have planned the following sessions for staff to complete their refresher training (previous training must have been completed and expire close to these dates):

- Level 2 Refresher: Monday 1 June and Tuesday 29 September

We have also booked these sessions for staff who need new training/previous training has expired:

- New Level 1 Course: Tuesday 15 September
- New Level 2 Course: Tuesday 13 and Thursday 22 October (both dates must be attended).

Please use [this online form](#) to book places on any of the above courses, and please do this as soon as possible for the session on the 1 June. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to [contact the Lighthouse Learning Team](#).



SEND Webinar: Successful Scaffolding & Scaffolding for Success

All LSP staff are invited to join this upcoming SEND webinar, hosted by Suzy Divine, Lead Teacher for SEND.

[Click here to book your place.](#)

SEND WEBINAR



'Successful Scaffolding and Scaffolding for Success'

Led by Suzy Divine, Lead Teacher for SEND

WEDNESDAY 20 MAY 2026 3.45-4.45PM

All Lighthouse staff are invited to join this upcoming SEND webinar.

This session will focus on:

- Scaffolding principles for SEND
- Planning for scaffolding and scaffolding for success
- Scaffolding strategies and practical adaptations in the classroom

The session largely draws on examples from KS1-3, but the practical strategies can be adapted for any age group.

(NB: Some schools have had the face-to-face version of this training, so this will be a repeat for them, but will be suitable for members of staff who were unable to attend).

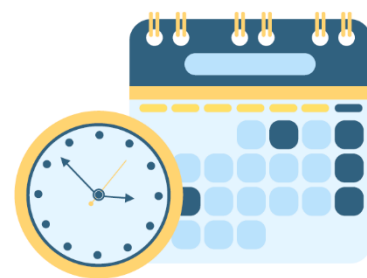
This session will be recorded and will be made available for a limited time after the event. Please have smart devices available to take part in any interactive sections.

BOOK YOUR PLACE

KEY LINKS, DATES & DEADLINES



These reminders do not replace the LSP Annual Planner so please ensure you are checking this regularly (link on next page).



DATE	INFORMATION	FAO
Thursday 7 May	Headteachers' Meeting. Nailsea Baptist Church from 8.30am	All Heads
11 - 14 May	KS2 SATs	All (Primary focused)
Friday 15 May at 5.00pm	Deadline to respond on Annual Support Fund Consultation. Comments and feedback should be emailed to enquiries@lsp.org.uk	Heads, Chairs & SBMs
Thursday 21 May	Summer Census Date	Headteachers & SBMs/OMs
18 - 22 May	Primary Moderation @ St Peters	Primary Headteachers





Please note the following links will only work for those who already have access to the relevant site or folder. If you feel you need to be given permission to access something please [let us know](#).



Annual Planner 2025/26

Click to view the Annual Planner for next academic year (Via Sharepoint)

Bulletin Index

Click to access an index of previous bulletin articles



Previous Bulletins

Click to access previous editions of the LSP Weekly News Bulletin

The Beacon

Click to read the latest edition of the LSP Newsletter: The Beacon



SHARE WITH US

Don't forget, you can submit your school news stories to be shared in our newsletters and on our social media.

Email your stories to: newsletter@lsp.org.uk