

**Schools Forum**

**16 January 2023**

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2022/23**  
**NOVEMBER 2022 MONITORING REPORT**

**This report is for Information**

**1. Recommendations:**

That Schools Forum members:

- 1.1 Note the contents of the report in relation to the 2022/23 HNB Grant budget monitoring for the period 1 April – 30 November 2022.

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1 To provide Schools Forum with the HNB monitoring position as at 30 November 2022 projected to 31 March 2023.

**3. HNB Budget 2022/23**

- 3.1 The HNB budget for 2022/23 reported to Schools Forum on 26 September was £60.808M, net of deductions.
- 3.2 The balance brought forward as at 1 April 2022 is £3.930M surplus.
- 3.3 The DFE will issue an updated HNB Grant figure in January 2023 which was too late to be included in this report.
- 3.4 The anticipated in year surplus as at 31 August 2022 projected to 31 March 2023 based on the updated Grant that was previously reported to Schools Forums was £1.040M
- 3.5 The current position as at 30 November 2022 projected to 31 March 2023 is now an in-year deficit of £1.266M
- 3.6 Appendix 1 shows the 2022/23 High Needs Block Budget Allocation, the actual expenditure as at 30 November 2022, the projected outturn as at 31 March 2023 and the variance from budget.

- 3.7 A column has also been added that shows the previously reported in year surplus of £1.040M
- 3.8 The Variances are explained below;

### **Variation 1 – Independent Schools**

Out of borough placements, show a budget pressure of £2.310M. This is an increase of £1.851M on previously reported figures following more pupils being placed in independent special and independent mainstream schools, due to a lack of provision available within Borough. The Placement and Provision Panel are currently placing 2-3 pupils per week. Any agreed placements have been included in the forecast figures together with a contingency of £500K for additional SEN placements and £200K for tri-part funded placements agreed with Sandwell Social Care Trust for any placements during the Spring Term. Should this contingency not be required the pressure in 2022/23 on this budget head will be reduced. However, the placements will impact in the next financial year as they will be full year funding rather than part year.

### **Variation 2 – Mainstream Schools**

There has been an increase in both EHCP assessments and the funding of early years pupils which has resulted in a pressure of £683k in delegated funding to school for individual pupil support.

### **Variation 3 – Focus Provision Schools**

There has been an increase in EHCP assessments which has resulted in a projected overspend of £175K on the delegated funding provided to Focus Provisions. This has increased from previously reported figures following some schools agreeing to go over the agreed commissioned places.

### **Variation 4 – SEN Special Unit**

A new Special Unit has been agreed at Uplands Primary School. It was previously budgeted for within the SEN Developments cost centre at the time the budgets for 2022/23 were finalised as discussions were still underway with the school and was not finalised and implemented at that point.

### **Variation 5 – High Point Special School**

There are more pupils on roll at High Point from 1 September 2022 than was anticipated when the budget was prepared. Therefore, there is a pressure of £186K.

### **Variation 6 – Early Years**

An amount of £480k from the Early Years Grant is used to offset the early support for pupils in private provider settings and those in mainstream early years settings. Predicted costs in private provider settings has increased from £660K previously reported to £710K. The support for EYS pupils in mainstream schools is set against the schools' delegation and not shown separately. The £480k will be insufficient to cover the full costs of meeting the needs of the pupils in the early years settings. There is a pressure of £230K against private providers alone.

### **Variation 7 – Recoupment**

The Element 3 top up costs of pupils placed in Sandwell schools that are the responsibility of a neighbouring LA are funded by Sandwell for all pupils in the special schools and LAC pupils placed in mainstream schools. This is recouped from the relevant authority. There has been an increase in pupils being placed which has resulted in an increase in recoupment income, with Shenstone being the highest importer of pupils due mainly to the location of the school.

### **Variation 8 – Albright Education Centre**

A small number of pupils have been placed temporarily at Albright Education Centre pending a permanent placement being agreed. These have been funded E3 Top up for the period of occupancy.

### **Variation 9 – SEN and Support for Inclusion Services**

The total variances equate to a saving of £347K across 10 service areas. These are mainly due to staff turnover, maternity leave, opting out of the LA superannuation scheme and full time budgeted posts covered by staff on reduced hours and the inclusion of 2022/23 pay awards. The savings within these areas will increase during the year following slippage in staff appointments.

## **Variation 10 SEN**

SEN Developments is showing an underspend of £1.3M – This budget head currently covers independent appeals and reports. It also holds the HNB surplus balancing figure of £630K, which is the difference between the calculated budgets as at 1 April 2022 and the HNB Grant initial settlement 2022/23 as well as the additional grant received in July 2022. The funding for the Special Unit was held here and is now accounted for in variance 4 Above

### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 That Schools Forum note the contents of the report.

Date: 06/01/23

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