

Report to School Forum

11 December 2023

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| Subject: | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023/24 High Needs Block Budget Monitoring (Period 7) |
| Director: | Director of Children and Education Michael Jarrett |
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1 Recommendations

1.1 The Schools' Forum is requested to note the report.





2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Schools Forum Regulations 2012 requires that the Schools' Forum meets regularly and is consulted by the local authority concerning the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), including budget and various related matters. The High Needs block (HNB) is one of the four blocks of funding within the DSG.

2.2 The Schools' Forum is requested to comment and note the contents of the report in relation to the 2023/24 HNB budget monitor for period 7 (end of October 2023).



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

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|---|---|
|  | <p>Best start in life for children and young people Delegated grant funding of High Needs in support of children with early identification of SEN, and to ensure they are ready for school, and schools being ready for children and families including suitable provision within schools in the community and being able to support that readiness and long term promotion of becoming good citizens within the community. Delivery of programmes that specifically address language development within the borough, working with schools and families.</p> |
|  | <p>Strong resilient communities Enhancement of existing green spaces, by creating new places to play and commitment of planting a tree for every child starting school up to 2030.</p> |
|  | <p>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods Ensure new quality homes being driven by our inclusive Economy principles benefit local people but communities having access to suitable good schools, health services and local amenities.</p> |
|  | <p>A strong and inclusive economy Delivery of new major education facilities and aspiration for SEN children and young people to achieve own goals working with education providers in ensuring good jobs.</p> |

4 HNB Budget 2023/24

4.1 The gross 2023/24 HNB allocation is £71.499m, taking account of recoupment (£4.190m) by the Department of Education (DfE) for academies, free schools and post-16 commissioned places, leaves a net sum **£67.309m**. This includes £0.125m additional grant received since the last report to School Forum, as details in table 1 below.



| Table1 - High Needs Block 2023/24 | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| | £'m | Period 7 forecast £'m | Outturn £'m |
| Allocation | £71.499 | £71.499 | £0 |
| <i>less recoupment</i> | <i>-£4.190</i> | <i>-£4.190</i> | £0 |
| LA allocation | £67.309 | £65.836 | -£1.473 |

- 4.2 Forecast spend at the end of period 7 (October 2023) is £65.836m which represents £1.473m surplus.
- 4.3 Appendix 1 shows the 2023/24 High Needs Block allocation, the 2023/24 Forecast outturn, the monetary and percentage variance from the budget, and the movement from last report in August 2023 (period 5).
- 4.4 The overall cumulative reserve balance of the HNB, as at 31st March 2023 is £5.759m. Adding the in-year surplus to this balance gives us a forecast cumulative surplus at the end of the year of £7.232m.
- 4.5 The variances are explained below as detailed in appendix 1:

Variation 1 – Independent Schools £404k surplus

Out of Borough placements forecast £404k underspend against budget. This is primarily due to children and young people with SEN in Sandwell requiring suitable specialist provision and shortage of suitable SEN places, therefore out of borough settings are currently used in support and to fulfil our statutory responsibilities.

Variation 2 – Pupil ‘Place Plus’ Funding £7k surplus

Surplus from Special Free School provision (of £12k) reduced by pressure across individual ‘place-plus’ funding (*place funding and top up*) paid to Focus provisions. This is the assumption all settings will be full due to an increase in Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which has resulted in an overspend of £5k on the delegated funding provided to Focus Provisions.

Variation 3 – SEN Support Services £15k surplus

The £15k variance equates to a small saving within staffing budgets due to maternity leave, opting out of the LA superannuation scheme and full-time budgeted posts covered by staff on reduced hours.



Variation 4 – Support for Inclusion £122k surplus

The total variances equate to a saving of £122k across 8 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.

Variation 5 – SEN Developments £760k saving

Earmarked budget in support of development of new provision and expansion in SEN places planned for 2023/24. There was slippage in 2022/23 and the same is anticipated in 2023/24 and budget will be earmarked, ringfenced and carried forward to next financial year.

Variation 6 – Other SEN Funding £12k pressure

Due to increases in demand, there is forecast pressure of £7k on Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), Physiotherapist and Occupational therapist. £5k additional recharge for IT services.

Variation 7 – Exclusion and Integration £52k surplus

Forecast saving of £52k due to staff vacancy.

Variation 8 – Additional High Needs Grant £125k

As per latest published DSG allocations, additional High Needs block funding earmarked towards future projects to be discussed with the LA and School Forum.

Variation 9 – High Needs block (HNB) underspend £1.473m

The in-year forecast underspend for 2023/24 for the HN block is £1.473m including additional grant funding of £0.125m based upon current expenditure and data analysis as at period 7 (31 October 2023).

5 Implications

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| Resources: | As presented in this document. |
| Legal and Governance: | The schools' forums (England) regulations 2012 govern the constitution and conduct of meetings of the forum. The schools finance (England) regulations 2012 determine those matters on which the local authority must or may consult the schools' forum and |



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| | those in respect of which the schools' forum can make decisions. These regulations make provision for the financial arrangements of local authorities in relation to the funding of maintained schools and providers of prescribed Early Years provision in England. |
| Risk: | None |
| Equality: | None |
| Health and Wellbeing: | None |
| Social Value: | None |
| Climate Change: | None |
| Corporate Parenting: | None |

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – High Needs Block Outturn (period 7) 2023/24

7. Background Papers

None.



Appendix 1
HIGH NEEDS BLOCK 2023/24 FORECAST OUTTURN

| | BUDGET ALLOCATION 2023/24 £ | SPEND as at 31/10/23 LEDGER REPORTS £ | FORECAST END OF YEAR OUTTURN £ | VARIANCE FROM BUDGET £ | % VARIANCE FROM BUDGET | VARIANCE REF IN REPORT | COMMENTS | Predicted Outturn 20/08/23 (P7) £ | Movement from Previous Report (P5) £ |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Out of Borough Placements | | | | | | | | | |
| Independent schools | 10,371,000 | 5,514,918 | 9,967,426 | -403,574 | -3.9% | 1 | Lack of Provision in Borough has meant more Independent Placements are being made at approx 3 per week with slippage. | -593,900 | 190,326 |
| OLA Maintained & Academy Schools | 1,823,000 | -804,217 | 1,823,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | OOB placements in OLA maintained and academy mainstream and special schools now reflects Phase transfers | 0 | 0 |
| Alternative Providers | 340,000 | 136,576 | 340,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | This is for Pupils with EHCPs that attend NTAS and Trageted Provision which are tuition services | 0 | 0 |
| Other associated costs | 40,000 | 0 | 40,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | Room hire for the support of Students receiving NTAS support while awaiting a school placement | 0 | 0 |
| | 12,574,000 | 4,847,277 | 12,170,426 | -403,574 | | | | -593,900 | 190,326 |
| 2 Pupil Top up & Place | | | | | | | | | |
| Mainstream Schools | 13,421,400 | - | 13,421,400 | 0 | 0.0% | 2 | Top up funding above notional budgets in schools | 0 | 0 |
| Focus Provisions | 3,499,533 | - | 3,504,200 | 4,667 | 0.1% | | Assumes full occupancy | 4,667 | 0 |
| Special Schools | 20,016,800 | - | 20,016,800 | 0 | 0.0% | | Special school place plus top up funding | 0 | 0 |
| Primary PRU | 572,000 | - | 572,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | Pupil Referral Unit - Primary provision | 0 | 0 |
| Secondary PRU | 2,772,100 | - | 2,772,100 | 0 | 0.0% | | Pupil Referral Unit - Secondary provision | 0 | 0 |
| High Point Free Special School | 1,397,267 | - | 1,385,600 | -11,667 | -0.8% | | Increase in pupil numbers from Sept 2022 | -11,667 | 0 |
| Elm Tree Free Special School | 778,400 | - | 778,400 | 0 | 0.0% | | Special Free school | 0 | 0 |
| Early Years Private Providers | 730,000 | 477,338 | 730,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | This is offset by support from EYS funding | 0 | 0 |
| Early Years Grant | -480,000 | - | -480,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | EYS income/grant | 0 | 0 |
| Other Support | 205,000 | 139,751 | 205,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | Other | 0 | 0 |
| Post 16 Colleges & Specialist Providers | 3,058,700 | 246,309 | 3,058,700 | 0 | 0.0% | | Post16 demand usually in total by January 24 | 0 | 0 |
| Alternative AWPU Prov | 270,000 | 12,400 | 270,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | AP AWPU | 0 | 0 |
| Recoupment | -1,564,800 | 8,910 | -1,564,800 | 0 | 0.0% | | This is recoupment of top up for OLA pupils placed in Sandwell Schools. The increase is due to an increase in OLA pupils placed in Sandwell schools. | 0 | 0 |
| | 44,676,400 | 884,709 | 44,669,400 | -7,000 | | | | -7,000 | 0 |
| 3 Albright Education Centre | 1,608,600 | -23,450 | 1,608,600 | 0 | 0.0% | | SEMH and Medical provision (in-borough) | 0 | 0 |
| 4 SEN Support Services | 559,000 | 255,900 | 543,600 | -15,400 | -2.8% | 3 | Maternity Leave, staff turnover and reduced hours and other associated expenditure following COVID | -15,400 | 0 |
| 5 Support for Inclusion | | | | | | | | | |
| Lace | 419,000 | 235,025 | 405,831 | -13,169 | -3.1% | 4 | Full time Budgeted post but post holder reduced hours | -17,900 | 4,731 |
| Inclusion Support | 1,182,500 | 637,068 | 1,177,000 | -5,500 | -0.5% | | Staff turnover | -5,500 | 0 |
| Sensory Support Team | 974,600 | 505,347 | 958,100 | -16,500 | -1.7% | | Staffing turnover | -16,500 | 0 |
| CCD Team | 544,500 | 335,811 | 580,600 | 36,100 | 6.6% | | Staffing turnover | 16,100 | 20,000 |
| Early Years Admin | 765,600 | 322,197 | 682,000 | -83,600 | -10.9% | | Materniy Leave and 0.5 vacancy | -83,600 | 0 |
| Preventing Primary Exclusions team | 237,500 | 82,984 | 204,100 | -33,400 | -14.1% | | Staff turnover | -33,400 | 0 |
| SEMH Team | 696,900 | 362,723 | 702,500 | 5,600 | 0.8% | | Full time Budgeted posts but post holders reduced hours | 5,600 | 0 |
| Fair Access Reintegration Officers | 164,400 | 71,671 | 153,000 | -11,400 | -6.9% | | Vacant post | -11,400 | 0 |
| | 4,985,000 | 2,552,824 | 4,863,131 | -121,869 | | | | -146,600 | 24,731 |
| 6 SEN Develpments | 1,802,967 | 108,676 | 1,043,467 | -759,500 | -42.1% | 5 | Initial Surplus on calculation of budgets was £630K and additional grant received of £370K | -759,500 | 0 |
| 7 Other SEN Funding | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Recharges | 508,500 | 0 | 508,500 | 0 | 0.0% | 6 | Corporate recharges | 0 | 0 |
| OT & Physio & SALT SLA | 73,100 | 40,495 | 80,100 | 7,000 | 9.6% | | Demand led budget | 7,000 | 0 |
| Equal Pay other SS | 50,400 | 0 | 50,400 | 0 | 0.0% | | Earmarked budget | 0 | 0 |
| Mediation | 30,000 | 2,906 | 30,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | Mediation budget | 0 | 0 |
| Hospital Recoupment | 30,000 | 3,178 | 30,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | Hospital provision and recovery | 0 | 0 |
| Medical Malpractice | 15,000 | 0 | 15,000 | 0 | 0.0% | | Medical budget | 0 | 0 |
| ITT Staff Contribution | 25,000 | 0 | 30,000 | 5,000 | 20.0% | | Recharges | 5,000 | 0 |
| Joint Commissioning Sensory Pilot | 72,500 | 15,394 | 72,500 | 0 | 0.0% | | JCS Pilot | 0 | 0 |
| | 804,500 | 61,973 | 816,500 | 12,000 | | | | 12,000 | 0 |
| 8 Exclusions & Reintegration | 172,900 | 73,736 | 121,200 | -51,700 | -29.9% | 7 | Vacant post | -51,700 | 0 |
| Additional grant | 125,942 | 0 | - | -125,942 | -100.0% | 8 | Additional grant 23/24 as per published tables | | -125,942 |
| TOTAL | 67,309,309 | 8,761,644 | 65,836,325 | -1,472,984 | -2.2% | 9 | Forecast underspend (p7) HNBlock | -1,562,100 | 89,116 |
| check | 67,309,309 | 8,761,644 | 65,836,325 | -1,472,984 | | | check | | |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | |

