

**SLOUGH SCHOOLS' FORUM**  
**12<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

**Directorate of Children, Learning and Skills**

---

**2020-21 Schools' Block 0.5% Top- Slice to High Needs Block**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report follows on from the paper presented at the October Schools' Forum and provides the outcome to the consultation concerning the Schools' Block top slice of 0.5% to be transferred into the High Needs Block to assist with supporting its in-year budgetary pressures.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Schools' Forum **note** the level of responses to the consultation with all 44 schools:
- 31 responses (70%) of which;
  - 26 in favour of **OPTION 2** – Do not support the transfer of funds of 0.5% from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block.
  - 5 in favour of **OPTION 1** – Do support the transfer of funds of 0.5% from the Schools' Block to the High Needs Block.
- 2.2 That Forum takes into consideration the outcome of the consultation and **decides** which option it wishes to implement.

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 As prescribed within the Schools Operational Guide 2020 to 2021:

**Movements from the Schools Block**

*196. The schools block will again be ring-fenced in 2020 to 2021, but local authorities will retain limited flexibility to transfer funding as outlined below. Local authorities may transfer up to 0.5% of their schools block funding into another block, with the approval of their schools forum.*

**4 BACKGROUND AND NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 Reiterated from the previous paper:  
As part of the deficit recovery plan, previously presented to Forum, the ESFA has placed an expectation onto the LA to, at a minimum, balance any in-year pressures within any block, which for Slough and almost all other LAs nationally, sits within the High Needs Block.

One efficient mechanism in which to contribute to this expectation is by seeking support from its schools. Whilst the top-slice will not eliminate the funding pressure entirely, it would improve the eventual outturn of the High Needs Block by around £0.7m.

- 4.2 The LA, as in previous years', will uphold the decision of the Schools' Forum in regards to the top-slice request. The ESFA has indicated that the additional funding allocated to the HNB for 2020-21 will meet our original planning for income from the Schools Block and therefore that they would not expect the LA to submit a dis-application request to the Secretary of State (SoS) to overturn forum's decision.

## **5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 Not applicable

## **6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 6.1 Not applicable

## **7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### 7.1 Monitoring Officer

The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of this report.

### 7.2 Section 151 Officer – Strategic Director of Finance and Resources

The financial implications of the report are outlined in the supporting information.

### 7.3 Access Implications

There are no access implications.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Concluded on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

### Contact for further information

Domenico Barani

Group Accountant - Children and Schools

[Domenico.barani@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Domenico.barani@slough.gov.uk)