

## **AP Place Funding 2024/25**

### ***Proposal for consideration at Schools Forum on 11 January 2024***

#### **1. Summary**

This proposal is made on behalf of Slough's registered Alternative Provision (AP) providers and requests that Schools Forum consider agreeing to an allocation of £150,000 from the headroom within the school's block allocation for 2024-2025.

This is to support schools across Slough with early intervention alternative provision by base funding places at Littledown School (for primary pupils) and Haybrook College (for secondary pupils). Approving this allocation for early intervention alternative provision will allow Littledown School and Haybrook College to work with colleagues to provide early intervention AP services for up to 15 pupils in the academic year 2024-25.

#### **2. Supporting Information**

For several years, Slough Borough Council has supported Slough schools by providing non-statutory funding for early intervention alternative provision across the primary and secondary sectors. The long-term impact of this funding was to increase the High Needs Block overspend. The section 114 notice, subsequent DSG management plan linked to the Safety Valve Programme, and DfE direction, mean that SBC is only able to fund statutory services and therefore no longer able to provide funding for early intervention alternative provision.

As SBC transitions to funding only statutory services, such as providing 6th-day provision for permanently excluded pupils or those deemed medically unfit to attend school, early intervention services are at risk of diminishing, and support for schools with high-needs pupils is being eroded. Slough schools will therefore need to work collaboratively to develop and fund the early intervention alternative provision required to support schools and their vulnerable and challenging pupils.

Collaborative arrangements through which schools collectively fund non-statutory alternative provision are already well established in many other local authorities, particularly those with high levels of academisation. The allocation requested in this proposal will provide base funding for AP provisions to develop required services, with schools that utilise the available services paying a reduced top-up rate.

The funding would be an allocation of a proportion of available Schools Block headroom/surplus. This would otherwise be distributed across all mainstream schools on top of the formula allocation, on the basis of pupil numbers as agreed at the Forum meeting in November 2023.

The allocation will be divided as follows:

- £50,000 allocated to Littledown School to provide base funding for 5 places
- £100,000 allocated to Haybrook College to provide base funding for 10 places

Littledown School and Haybrook College will work collaboratively with schools across the sector to determine how the funding will be utilised appropriately by September 2024. The following points (as a minimum) will be considered and agreed by schools and the AP provisions:

- What early intervention services will be available to schools?
- How these services will be accessed?
- How these services will be distributed fairly to schools?
- How much will the top funding cost?
- How the impact will be measured, and who will the KPIs be reported to?

### **3. Financial Implication**

The overall 2024-2025 Schools Block allocation for distribution would be reduced by £150k. Each school would therefore receive a slightly lower budget share than would otherwise have been the case. The assumption in this proposal is that the funding would be an allocation of a proportion of available headroom within Schools Block. This is funding received by the LA over and above the aggregated National Funding Formula allocation and would otherwise be distributed across all mainstream schools on the basis of pupil numbers, as agreed at the Forum meeting in November 2023.

### **4. Alternative Options Considered**

There are no viable alternatives to ensure this provision continues to be funded. If the top slice is not agreed upon, the impact is that early intervention alternative provision will be lost.

### **5. Future Developments**

In future years, schools will need to work collaboratively together and in collaboration with AP providers to determine what AP provision they want to develop to support schools. The aim will be to bring forward a fully developed and costed AP development plan for a School's Block top slice in 2025-26 and beyond.

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