

Schools Forum 11 January 2024	
Report from Executive Director of People - Children Services	
Dedicated Schools Grant Schools Budget 2024/25	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
No. of Appendices:	Appendix A – High-level Funding Analysis Appendix B – Reconciliation of 2024/25 APT movement between Oct and Dec 2023
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1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed DSG Schools Budget for consultation and recommendation by Schools Forum ahead of the Council budget being set and approved by full Council.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To comply with regulation and to furnish Schools Forum with the relevant information regarding schools funding.
- 2.2 Schools Forum is asked to confirm its November 2023 provisional decision to transfer 0.50% from the Schools Block to support the High Needs Block. Based on the December 2023 published allocations, this amounts to £0.862m. DfE regulations permit up to 0.5% of the Schools Block to be transferred with Schools Forum approval.
- 2.3 Schools Forum is asked to recommend the budget for the DSG blocks, including the mainstream funding formula to Slough Borough Council.

3 Summary- 2024/25 DSG Funding Announcements

- 3.1. In November 2023, Schools Forum were presented with the provisional DSG allocations, which were published in October 2023. The final DSG block funding allocations were announced on 19 December 2023. This report gives an update of the final Schools Block allocations to include the growth funding allocation.

DSG Block	2023/24 Funding	2024/25 Funding	Change	Change
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Schools Block ¹	162,757	172,308	9,550	5.87%
High Needs Block ²	36,547	37,481	1,024	2.80%
Central Schools Services Block	785	840	65	8.28%
Early Year Block ³	14,883	20,886	6,003	40.33%
	214,972	231,515	16,543	7.70%

Note 1:- In addition to the DSG Schools Block Funding there is a Main Stream Additional Grant of £5.433 million in 2023/24. When added to the schools block funding above this takes mainstream schools funding to £168.190 million.

Note 2:- The HNB Allocation 2023/24 was amended by DfE in July 2023 to reflect subsequent data on places and import/export figures.

Note 3:- The EYB Allocation 2023/24 was amended by the DfE in July 2023 to reflect the latest EY census data from January 2023. This may be revised again when the January 2024 census data becomes available.

- 3.2. The growth funding allocation included in the Schools Block has changed from £0.950m in 2023/24 to £0.863m in 2024/25.
- 3.3. The High Needs Block allocation has been announced at £37.481m, an increase of £1.024m on the current allocation for 2023/24 and represents a funding increase of 2.80%.
- 3.4. The number of children with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) is continuing to increase, therefore in addition to a number of measures outlined in the DSG management plan, Schools Forum is asked to approve a 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. A detailed breakdown of the high needs block budget will be presented to Schools Forum in March 2024.
- 3.5. The Early Years Block allocations were also published in December 2023, which included further funding for qualifying working parents of 2-year-olds and children over 9 months.
- 3.6. Early Years funding rate options for 2024/25 have been consulted on with sector providers and are the subject of a separate paper to be presented to this Schools Forum.
- 3.7. The Central School Services Block income was confirmed at £0.840m, an increase of £0.065m compared to 2023/24. This includes a small reduction of funding for historic commitments, and an increase in funding for ongoing commitments.

4 Schools Block Expenditure 2024/25 – Mainstream Funding Formula

- 4.1 The original financial modelling Summer 2023 estimated a headroom on the School Block allocation of £2.229m, and the consultation proposal was to transfer of 0.5% to the high needs block with the remainder to be allocated to maintained schools and academies through the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) Factor.
- 4.2 It was reported in the November 2023 School Forum that the latest data provided in October 2023 suggested a headroom in the school block allocation of £3.537m. This would have enabled £2.405m to be allocated via AWPU, which is the maximum allowable increase of 2.5%, and would leave £0.857m for the High Needs Block transfer and a contingency of £0.275m
- 4.3 Based on current funding factors and updated census information provided in Dec23, the anticipated headroom on the Schools Block DSG has reduced to £1.985m, which after the proposed High Needs Block transfer of 0.5% (£0.862m) and proposed growth fund £0.500 leaves a headroom of £0.623m to be allocated.
- 4.4 Appendix A provides a high-level analysis of the Schools Block DSG and current funding allocations but may be subject to change as the modelling develops.
- 4.5 There are multiple reasons for the change in headroom of £2.057m between October and December 2023:-

School Block Allocation	+£0.909m
Revised census impact	-£1.866m
Inclusion of split site allocation	-£0.305m
Proposed growth fund	-£0.500m
Revision of LPA factor	-£0.166m
Factor rounding to 5/0	-£0.128m

- 4.6 Appendix B provides further details on these changes in headroom.

5 Growth Fund

- 5.1 The proposed growth fund budget in 2024/25 is £0.500m and a detailed Growth Fund report is being presented to this Schools Forum

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications have been detailed in the body of this paper. Any additional funding received would go towards mitigating inflationary costs pressures faced by schools.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No alternative options were considered.

8 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Not applicable

9 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications for this report.

10 Equality Implications

Not applicable