

School Forum 26 June 2024	
Report from Executive Director of People - Children Services	
DSG HN Budget 2024/25	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
No. of Appendices:	None
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1. Purpose of the report

1.1 This report provides Schools Forum with an update on the forecast expenditure from the High Needs Block (HNB) for 2024/25.

2. Recommendation

2.1 Schools Forum is asked to note the contents of this report.

3. Summary

3.1 In line with the Safety Valve conditions, the council is presenting a balanced budget for the High Needs Block 2024/25.

3.2 The High Needs Block is currently experiencing a pressure, which is mainly attributed to the increase in demand for Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs). The council is continuing to reduce the backlog which places further demands on the budget.

3.3 There are plans to increase high needs provision at Arbour Vale School though capital investment, and commissioned places in borough continue to rise where feasible, but it is likely that demand will outstrip supply and that some pupils needs will need to be met through more costly placements in Independent Special Schools (ISS) and Out Of Borough (OOB) provisions, thus increasing the strain on the current budget.

4. DSG Block Allocations 2024/25

4.1 DSG allocations for 2024/25 as reported to Schools Forum in January 2024 were amended in March 2024 as follows:-

DSG Block 2024/25 Allocations	19 th Dec 2023	25 th Mar 2024	Change	Change
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Schools Block	172,308	172,308	0	0%
High Needs Block	37,481	37,481	0	0%
Central Schools Services Block	840	840	0	0%
Early Year Block	20,886	21,197	311	1.5%
	231,515	231,826	311	0.1%

4.2 The change in total allocation for Early Years Block is due to updated census figures.

4.3 Inclusive of recoupment (Schools Block) and direct funding of high needs places (High Needs Block), the net funding received by Slough Borough Council is as follows:-

DSG Block 2024/25 Allocations	25 th Mar 2024	Block Transfers	Adjustment	Net allocation to SBC
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Schools Block	172,308	-862	-129,433	42,013
High Needs Block	37,481	762	-9,804	28,439
Central Schools Services Block	840	100	0	940
Early Year Block	21,197	0	0	21,197
	231,826	0	311	92,589

4.4 These figures are subject to adjustment by ESFA at various points during the year due to census data, import & export information and commissioned place data.

5. High Needs Budget Summary

5.1 The expenditure budget for 2024/25 based on the latest allocation figures are as follows:-

Description	Amount £m
HNB allocation inclusive of block transfer from SB	(£28.439)
HN top up Pre and Post 16	£7.429
Place funding including resource base and Out of Borough	£6.919
HN special Academies	£6.730
Independent Special Schools and Alternative Provisions	£2.682
Hospital Education Services	£0.150
Home Education	£0.070
MFG and 3.4% uplift +Teachers Pay and Pension Grant	£1.580
SALT	£0.700
Autism Outreach and Sensory and other services	£1.020
Other outside Statutory duties	£0.208
Early Intervention	£0.700
EY advisory Teacher/ Support worker and Inclusion staffing	£0.251

- 5.2 EHCP applications have increased significantly. Final plans rose from 1,400 to 2,000 (+42.86%) in the year 2023-2024. This is in line with national trends and is anticipated to continue into 2024-25.
- 5.3 Conservative SEND Service forecasting indicates an additional 420 plans in the year 2024-25 raising the total to 2,420 (a further 21% increase). This represents 35 backlog EHCP assessments per month. There is a risk that actual numbers will exceed this by approximately 150 -250 EHCPs in year 24/25.
- 5.4 Using an estimated annual revenue cost of £5,000 per plan (the lower end of the matrix banding), the additional 420 EHCPs could result in an additional £1,137,500 expenditure to cover the provision in the plans assuming that the plans are completed at a rate of 35 per month throughout the year. This has been included in the presented budget.
- 5.5 Nationally, on average, 33.2% of EHCP's require specialist placement, therefore there may be demand for 139 specialist places and 281 mainstream placements. Because

of capacity issues this may result in placements to Independent Special Schools and Out Of Borough Placements, which could incur a premium, putting additional pressure on the High Needs Budget.

6. Financial Implications

The financial implications have been detailed in the body of this paper.

7. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications for this report.

8. Equality Implications

Not applicable

9. Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

Not applicable

10. Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

Not applicable