



Report to the Schools Forum

Title:	High Needs Budgets
Committee date:	Tuesday 28 th November 2017
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Purpose of Agenda Item

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Schools Forum on the proposed transfer of £650k from the schools block to the high needs block.

Background

The “high needs block” part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (c. £80m) continues to be under pressure due to the increase in demand for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

A paper was provided to Schools Forum on 31st October 2017 setting out some of these issues and the consultation with schools also set out proposals to request a transfer of funding from the schools block to support high needs for up to two years.

The Schools Forum can only approve this funding if they are satisfied with the conditions set out in the “operational guide” (sections 119/120). This is set out in the Appendix.

Any approval can only be given for 2018/19. A separate approval in 2018/19 for the 2019.20 transfer request would be needed. (Subject to whatever guidance is provided for that decision at the time).

The consultation has been analysed (this is set out in the Appendix to the school funding formula paper on the same agenda) and support for a transfer of £650k in 2018.19 has been provided. This equates to c. 0.22% of the schools budget in 2018/19.

The impact of this has been reflected in the analysis of school budgets also part of the above report.

Key issues

- The SEND strategy will lead to change across SEND which will help to manage demand and the unit cost of demand so that the budget required is contained within the High Needs Block funding.
- The budget proposals that support the strategy balance to the available funding in 2021/22. There are shortfalls until that year which can be managed through the support in part of schools, through a transfer from the schools block plus the use of the remaining DSG reserve.
- The budget proposals significantly increase the funding to Buckinghamshire schools supporting pupils with SEND (whether they have EHCPs or not).
- The greatest saving as a result of the strategy succeeding as expected is from the budgets for independent schools.
- By agreeing the transfer the Schools Forum also are validating the proposed high needs budgets. The revised budgets are set out in the Appendix.

Recommendations

The Schools Forum is asked to vote on the following proposals:

- 1. To support the transfer of £650k of schools block funding in 2018/19 to the High Needs block.***

Next Steps

- The agreed funding will be deducted from the final allocation of the “schools block” before the calculation of the school funding formula is undertaken.

Appendices

- Revised high needs budget proposals
- Operational Guide compliance report
- Strategy update with summary high needs budget (presented by the Director for Education at this Schools Forum meeting)