



Report to Schools Forum

Date: 23rd March 2021

Title: Dedicated Schools Budget – Revenue Budget Monitoring 2020-21

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Recommendations: Schools Forum is asked to note the revenue budget monitoring position at the end of January (Period 10).

Reason for decision: For Information

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. This report outlines the current forecast for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget for the 2020-21 financial year, based on the spend to 31st January 2021 (period 10).

2. Forecast 2020-21

2.1. The current projected position against the DSG blocks is summarised in the following table:

DSG Block	Budget 2020-21 £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m	Previous Forecast £m	Movement £m
Schools Block	174.712	173.585	(1.127)	(1.127)	0.000
Central Schools Services Block	5.535	5.348	(0.187)	(0.191)	0.004
High Needs Block	82.120	87.070	4.950	5.588	(0.638)
Early Years Block	32.601	32.460	(0.141)	0.152	(0.293)
Total	294.968	298.463	3.494	4.422	(0.928)

2.2. Note that budgets are shown after academy recoupment which removes budgets for academies from the schools block and also funding for places directly funded by the ESFA is removed from the high needs block.

2.3. DSG budgets are projected to be £3.494m overspent in the current financial year. A comparison with the previous report to Schools Forum is also included. Note that for all blocks except high needs this is a comparison with the budget monitoring

report considered by Schools Forum in December, for high needs the comparison is updated for the forecast shared as part of the budget monitoring paper.

3. Schools Block

3.1. The Schools Block is currently projected to underspend by £1.127m. This relates to a projected underspend against the growth fund in the current year. It was reported to Schools Forum in January that this underspend will be required to support the growth fund in 2021-22.

4. Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)

4.1. The CSSB is projected to underspend by £187k in the current year due to savings made against the historic commitment element of the budget.

5. High Needs Block

5.1. High Needs Block budgets are projected to overspend by £4.949m. This is a reduction of £638k compared to the position reported to Schools Forum in the budget report in January. Detailed work has taken place to review all post-16 students attending the Bucks College Group provision and this has enabled the forecast for post-16 expenditure to be confirmed.

5.2. The variances against the high needs block are detailed in Appendix 1 to this report. The main variances are summarised in the table below:

	Budget 2020/21	Forecast Outturn 2020/21	Forecast variance 2020/21
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Post-16 Colleges	6,742	8,919	2,177
Placements in other local authority schools	2,497	4,076	1,579
Support for pupils with EHCPs in Mainstream Schools	8,873	9,554	681
Independent Special School Placements	14,600	15,085	485
Additional places and exceptional support	513	946	433
Additional Resourced Provision (ARPs)	3,212	3,508	296
Maintained and Academy special schools	31,890	31,558	-331
Support for pupils without EHCPs in mainstream schools (SEN Support)	1,076	660	-416

6. Early Years Block

6.1. Early Years budgets are currently projected to underspend by £141k

6.2. Settings are currently being funded as per current government guidance. Where pupils on roll have been prevented from attending due to COVID, and where the place is ready and available to the child funding has been paid to the sector to reserve their place for a short period of time, as per Buckinghamshire Early Years Funding guidance. In accordance with DfE Guidance the Council is continuing to fund providers which have been advised to close, or left with no option but to close, due to public health reasons. This is to support sustainability within the sector during the pandemic.

7. DSG Reserve and Deficit Management Planning

7.1. Any variance against the DSG is to be managed through the DSG reserve which is ringfenced. At the start of the 2020-21 financial year the council had a deficit of £1.153m against its DSG reserve. Following contributions agreed by Schools Forum in this year's budget and additional early years funding received in July to reflect the impact of the January 2020 census on the 2019-20 DSG allocation, the reserve currently has a positive balance of £86k. Part of this reserve will be required to meet the costs of any claims for TU facilities costs as no funding was de-delegated for this purpose in 2020-21.

7.2. The DSG Recovery Board met on 5th March and to agree terms of reference and priority workstreams, these are detailed further in a separate report on this agenda.

