



Report to Schools Forum

Date: 17th January 2023

Title: Dedicated Schools Budget – Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022-23

Author: Liz Williams, Head of Finance, Children’s Services

Recommendations:

Schools Forum is asked to note the revenue budget monitoring forecast at the end of December 2022 (Period 9)

Reason for decision: For Information

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. This report updates Schools Forum on the current forecast for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget for the 2022-23 financial year, based on the spend to 31st December 2022 (period 9).

2. Forecast 2022-23

2.1. The overall Dedicated Schools Budget is currently projected to underspend by £0.29m as at the end of December.

	Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Forecast Variance £'000	%
Central Block	5,054	5,219	165	3%
Early Years Block	34,579	33,286	-1,292	-4%
High Needs Block	104,062	104,900	838	1%
Schools Block	174,797	174,797	0	0%
	318,492	318,203	-289	
Funding Block	-318,492	-318,203	289	0%
Education - DSG Total	-0	0	0	-0

2.2. The main reason for the projected underspend is a continued projected underspend for the early years block. It is likely that the DSG settlement for 2022-23 will be adjusted downwards after the end of this financial year to reflect this lower take up

of places if numbers in the January 2023 early years census remain low. Therefore a proportion of this underspend is expected to be clawed back in 2023-24.

2.3. A summary of the current forecast against the high needs block is attached as an appendix to this report. High needs budgets are projected to overspend by £0.84m this year, an increase of £0.1m since the last report to Schools Forum. The forecast takes into account the unallocated contingency of £1.7m and includes pressures against the budgets for both independent and Buckinghamshire maintained and academy special schools, personal budgets and mainstream top ups, alternative provision and integrated therapies.

2.4. From September a number of additional places have been funded across special schools within Buckinghamshire in order to meet demand. By supporting additional places in Buckinghamshire schools the need for placements in the independent sector can be reduced

2.5. Schools block is currently projected to break even.

2.6. Central schools services block is projected to overspend by £0.17m due to pressures against the budget for Premature Retirement Costs as costs continue to exceed the available budget. There are also small overspends against the Admissions Team and the budget for copyright licences.

3. DSG Reserve

3.1. Any variance against the DSG is to be managed through the DSG reserve which is ringfenced. At the start of the 2022-23 financial year the council had a deficit of £3.6m against its DSG reserve.

3.2. The current projected overspend will reduce the deficit at the end of the year however as noted earlier in this report there is the potential for a clawback of the underspend against the early years block.

