



Report to Schools Forum

Date: 5th December 2023

Title: Dedicated Schools Budget – Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023-24

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Recommendations:

Schools Forum is asked to note the revenue budget monitoring forecast at the end of October (Period 7)

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 2023-24 financial year, based on the spend to 31st October 2023 (period 7).

2. Forecast 2023-24

2.1. The overall Dedicated Schools Budget is currently projected to overspend by £3.14m as at the end of October.

	Budget £'000	Forecast £'000	Forecast Variance £'000	%
Central Block	4,935	5,111	177	4%
Early Years Block	39,568	39,568	0	0%
High Needs Block	114,708	117,671	2,964	3%
Schools Block	174,217	174,217	0	0%
	333,427	336,567	3,140	

2.1 The main reason for the projected overspend on DSG is the forecast overspend on the High Needs block of £2.964m. A summary of the current forecast against the high needs block is attached as an appendix to this report. The projected overspend includes an additional £1.002m of independent special schools spend, reflecting an 8.5% increase in

pupils in those schools compared to budget. Top-ups in Early Years and Mainstream (for both those with plans and without plans) shows an increase in spend of £2.994 reflecting the expansion in the numbers supported. Offsetting this are underspends of £0.497m in Integrated therapies due to delays in recruiting staff to deliver the contract and a reduced forecast for Post 16 which reflects last year's outturn. The mitigating actions within the 2023-24 High Needs budget have overall delivered the reductions expected.

2.2 It is likely that the forecast in future months will include further pressures on top-ups and for Special school places.

2.3 Schools block is currently projected to break even.

2.4 Central schools services block is projected to overspend by £0.177m due to pressures against the budget for Premature Retirement Costs as costs continue to exceed the available budget.

3 DSG Reserve

3.3 Any variance against the DSG is to be managed through the DSG reserve which is ringfenced. At the start of the 2023-24 financial year the council had a deficit of £1.6m against its DSG reserve.

3.4 The current projected overspend will increase the deficit at the end of the year to £4.7m.

