

TO: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning
DATE: 30 March 2022

Local Authority Proposals for the 2022-23 High Needs Block Budget
Executive Director: People

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from the Executive Member to set the 2022-23 High Needs Block (HNB) element of the Schools Budget after taking account of any comments made by the Schools Forum.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Executive Member AGREES the 2022-23 proposals for the High needs Block Budget reported to the Schools Forum on 22 March as set out in paragraph 3.1 of Appendix A.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure that the Schools Budget is set taking account of the views of the Executive, schools, the Schools Forum and the statutory funding framework.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The proposals reflect the actions contained in the SEND Commissioning Strategy.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 Whilst spending on the Schools Budget is funded by the ring fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and therefore outside of the Council's funding responsibilities, Local Authorities (LA) retain a statutory duty to set the overall level of the Schools Budget before the start of each financial year. In deciding the relevant amount, LAs must plan to spend at least to the level of estimated DSG and can also take account of any accumulated under or overspending on the Schools Budget from previous years.
- 5.2 The recommendation in this report is in accordance with the recommendations expected to be agreed by the Schools Forum at its meeting of 22 March. Budget decisions taken by the Executive Member have always been in accordance with the wishes of the Schools Forum, and the recommendations on this paper maintain that position. Decisions around the Schools Block and Early Years Block elements of the Schools Budget have already been taken by the Leader of the council.
- 5.3 The Executive Member has observer status on the Schools Forum, receiving all reports and entitled to attend meetings, and is therefore actively involved in the operation and deliberations of the Schools Forum.

6 **Advice Received from Statutory and other Officers**

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are addressed within the main body of the report to Schools Forum.

Director of Finance

- 6.2 The financial implications anticipated at this stage confirm the expected significant financial difficulties that will arise on HNB budgets. A number of developments are planned that are expected to contribute over the medium-term to widening choice and cost reduction. However, a significant funding gap remains, and further work is required to move to a sustainable budget position.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 There are no specific impacts arising from this report.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 These are set out in Appendix A of the Schools Forum report.

7 **Consultation**

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 People DMT, Schools Forum.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Written reports.

Representations Received

- 7.3 Where relevant, included in the reports.

Background Papers

None.

Contact for further information

Paul Clark, Finance Business Partner – People Directorate

4054

Doc. Ref

https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools_Forum/Exec_Member_Reports/2022-23_HN_Block_Elements_of_the_Schools_Budget_v3.docx

Approved by Cllr Dr Gareth Barnard
Executive Member, Children, Young People
& Learning

Signature.....

Date: 30 March 2022

Approved by Grainne Siggins
Executive Director: People

Signature.....

Date: 30 March 2022

Extract from expected Schools Forum agreement

TO: Schools Forum

DATE: 29 March 2022

2022-23 PROPOSALS FOR THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK BUDGET
Executive Director of People

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the Executive Member:

1. sets the total HNB budget at £28.907m,
2. releases £0.210m of funds from the SEND Units Reserve to finance ongoing diseconomy costs at the new Special Resource Provisions
3. confirms the changes set out in the supporting information at Table 1 and Annex 2 of Appendix 1
4. confirms relevant budgets to those summarised in Annex 3, Appendix 1.
5. ensures that a medium-term financial plan is presented to the Forum in the autumn term 2022, setting out options to balance annual expenditure to annual income.

The relevant Schools Forum report can be viewed in full here:

[Agenda for Schools Forum on Tuesday, 29 March 2022, 4.30 pm | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](https://bracknell-forest.gov.uk)