

TO: Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning
DATE: 19 March 2024

**Local Authority Proposals for the 2024-25
High Needs Block elements of the Schools Budget**

Executive Director: People
Executive Director: Resources

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from the Executive Member to set the 2024-25 High Needs Block elements of the Schools Budget on the basis of recommendations made by the Schools Forum.
- 1.2 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.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Executive Member AGREES the budget proposals approved by the Schools Forum at its meetings on 7 March 2024, as set out in paragraph 3.1 of Appendix A.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure that relevant elements of the 2024-25 Schools Budget are set in accordance with the views of schools, other providers of education, the Schools Forum, the funding framework and the available level of resources.

4 Alternative options considered

- 4.1 These have been considered during the budget consultation stage and previous reports to the Schools Forum.

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 legal 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 At its meeting of 12 December 2023, the Executive agreed that the 2024-25 Schools Budget should be set at the eventual level of grant income plus any accumulated DSG balances. Additionally, at its meeting on 6 February 2024 the Executive also agreed that the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning

approves the detailed budget allocations for High Needs pupils, up to the estimated level of available resources.

- 5.3 Appendix A presents the recommendations approved by the Schools Forum at its meeting of 7 March for the High Needs Block element of the DSG. The Appendix also contains a link to the council's website where the full report can be viewed which the Executive Member is now recommended to endorse.
- 5.4 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.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the attached Appendix A.

Director of Finance

- 6.2 The financial implications arising from this report are set out within the supporting information of Appendix A.

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 and Appendix B.

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

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Doc. Ref

https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/fina/bpm/FIBPSCB-FIN9.6/Schools_Forum/Exec_Member_Reports/2024-25_final_budget_proposals_for_the_HNB_Budget.docx

To Schools Forum
Date: 7 March 2024

Final Proposals for the 2024-25 High Needs Block Budget

**Executive Director of People
Executive Director: Resources**

Report extract containing relevant budget recommendations for agreement by the Executive Member:

That the Forum agrees that for the 2024-25 financial year:

3.1 That the Executive Member:

- 1. sets the total HNB Dedicated Schools Grant income at £24.686m**
- 2. confirms the changes to relevant budgets set out in the supporting information (summarised in Table 1 and Annexes 2 and 3).**

The report can be viewed in full here:

[\(ITEM \) \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#)