



SCHOOLS FORUM

TUESDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 2020

At 2.00 pm

in the

VIRTUAL MEETING - ONLINE ACCESS, [YOUTUBE](#)

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART I

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
6.	<u>HIGH NEEDS BLOCK REVIEW</u> To receive the above report.	1 - 4

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Date:	22nd September 2020	AGENDA ITEM:
Title:	High Needs Block priorities 2021 onwards	
Responsible officer:	Kevin McDaniel, Director of Children’s Services	
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the views of Forum on the proposed priority areas of budget allocation with the High Needs Block for 2021/22. The High Needs Block allocation is set out nationally by the Department for Education and the local authority has the authority to determine how it is spent, in line with the detailed regulations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum is asked to:

- note and comment on the contents of this report.
- provide feedback on the priorities as set out in table 1 which the local authority will use to develop the High Needs Block budget for 2021/22.

3. REASONS FOR CHANGE

3.1 The High Needs Block budget is currently forecast at an in-year deficit of £810,000 for 2020/21, leading to a cumulative Dedicated Schools Grant deficit of £1,233,000. This deficit requires the local authority to provide a deficit recovery plan to the Department for Education and the main element is a review of the High Needs Block expenditure.

3.2 Since the local area inspection of services for young people with additional needs, there has been a three year pilot of a number of system changes to increase the effectiveness of the system for young people and to drive up inclusivity. That funding ends in the current financial year and consideration needs to be made about securing the progress that has been made.

3.3 The council is undertaking formal consultation on opening four new resource bases in primary schools from September 2021 and will need to ensure there is sufficient resource allocated from the High Needs Block to enable those units to recruit staff and develop in due course.

4. PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

4.1 Table 1 sets out, *in order*, the proposed priority areas of expenditure from the High Needs Block along with the rationale, including if the duty is statutory or required by regulation.

Title	Description	Duty
Education, Health & Care Plan Top-up	Needs led allocation of top-up funding, calculated via the matrix and provided to state funded settings	Yes

Education, Health & Care Plan Placement	Fees charged by non-maintained special schools and independent schools to secure a school place for a pupil with an Education, Health & Care Plan.	Yes
Place funding for state funded special schools and colleges	Base budget allocation for Manor Green, Forest Bridge and BCA.	Yes
Place funding for resources bases	Funding for current units at Furze Platt, Charters, Riverside and Wessex. Allocation for two new units in September 2021 and headroom for two further units in September 2022	Yes
Early Years SEND support	Funding to providers to support pre-school age children with additional needs.	Yes
Provision of education to excluded children	Services to provide education for pupils excluded from school for longer than 5 days.	Yes
Provision of education to children medically unable to attend school	Services to provide education to pupils unable to attend schools for an extended period	Yes
The virtual school for children in our care	The provision of support for CiC to ensure they are receiving a good education [directs the expenditure of the Pupil Premium Plus]	Yes
Officer capacity to develop and negotiate access to education and related support services	Senior education lead to monitor and coordinate the range of provision and drive inclusive system development within the Royal Borough, including the local charter mark audit and adoption. Commissioning capacity to ensure contracts represent good value for money.	No
Area SENCO capacity	Role to lead SENCO network to develop, refine and implement the graduated response across the Royal Borough	No
Hearing and Visual Impaired Support	Use of Sensory Consortium service to support the educational progress of HI and VI pupils	Yes
Wellbeing service	Early help services based on good mental health interventions	No
EP and EWO support	Resource to provide more than statutory minimum offer to all schools, further topped up through buy-back	No
SEMH project	Continue development of SEMH project to drive system change in schools in light of changing pupil needs	No
Inclusion Outreach services	Services delivered from existing special schools and units to support mainstream school skill development for increased inclusion.	No
Specialist teaching support	Support for individual pupils based on specific characteristics	No
Behaviour Support service	Support for schools with individual pupil needs	No
Transport assistants for additional needs pupils	Provision of assistants for those on SEND transport	Yes
Alternative Provision	Includes the placement costs to support those who need education without an Education, Health & Care Plan that cannot be met through existing provision	Yes

Hard to place	Funding to support the Fair Access Protocol for pupils unable to secure a school place through the admissions process but separate from Education, Health & Care Plan funding	No
Speech and Language capacity	Central contract for delivery of SALT work across schools	No
Deficit recovery	An allocation to begin to recover the overall DSG deficit over the next three years	Yes

5. **IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 With the increasing number of pupils with Education, Health & Care Plans (1,008 in August 2020) there will be further pressure on the High Needs Block which means there will be less choice in the allocation of the block.
- 5.2 The detailed regulations continue to restrict the range of services which can be charged directly to the DSG, with the national focus being on delegating funds to schools. It is therefore likely that some services will only continue on a system wide basis if a buyback / retention is agreed by the Forum when setting the budget.
- 5.3 The Local Authority will make a detailed High Needs block plan for adoption as part of the overall Dedicated Schools Grant budget to be approved by the Forum in late 2020.

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