



**Agenda Item
10**

Commissioning Unit
Report to Schools Forum

Report Status

For information/note
For consultation & views **x**
For decision

Report Title: Proposals for Back to Budget Plan HNB January 2017

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Purpose: To describe the actions to be taken to ensure children with SEND have a service that is of high quality and value for money

Recommendations:

1. That Schools Forum notes the contents of the report and agrees the approach

1. Introduction

The high needs block overspend needs to be contained and brought back to budget over time. A range of strategies need to be implemented to reduce the spend. The increased spend has been caused by:

- The increased age range of young people who are supported through the high needs block, which means that there is reduced throughput of young people
- The limited local capacity of special school places in Haringey for children with SEMH and Autism.

The initial measures put in place to control the spend were heavily reliant on moving children back to local school provision, and maximising the use of local provision. Whilst this has in some ways minimised the spend through the high needs block, it has not been effective enough in reducing the overall rate of the overspend.

The purpose of this paper is to outline a wider range of methods to reduce spend, whilst also ensuring that children with special educational needs and disabilities have effective support for their learning.

2. Proposed measures to reduce spend

2.1 Hold Under spends in Services

Several services have underspend as a result of vacancies. These will be held and the budgets reduced.

Portage

There are now four Portage workers who are able to hold caseloads of up to 40 children at any one time in total. This is a service for children with highly complex special needs. Currently there is capacity in the Portage workers caseloads and the full budget has not been spent. The remaining budget has been held and returned to the high needs block.

Autism and Language Support Teams

There are vacancies in both the Autism Team and Language Support. It is proposed that this team is restructured to form a social communication service working across the age ranges. The proposal is to reduce this budget by 100K following the re-structure.

2.2 Changed usage of the SEN contingency.

It is proposed that the SEN contingency is distributed differently across a smaller number of schools. The High Needs Working party seeks agreement to improve the focus and level of resourcing to those who need it. The resources provided will be more substantial but to a fewer number of schools. It will continue to be used to target those where the ratio of high needs children and APT means the notional SEN funding is not enough to support the learning outcomes of the volume of children with EHC's.

Historically the contingency has been calculated using a formula across a wide range of schools, where often fairly small amounts were distributed. The new formula used would

targeting fewer specific schools with high levels of children with EHC's, distributing 300K across these schools, after the numbers of EHC's have been sampled from each school at a fixed point in the year.

The high needs working party are in discussion using a formula that compares the nominal SEN numbers with the actual numbers of 6000's to be allocated within the notional SEN budget.

The overall SEN contingency budget would then be reduced by 200K

2.3 Reduce the Early Years Top Up Funding

The Early Years Top Up funding was introduced in September 2016 for children's centres and nurseries to allow access to additional funding for children. This has taken some time to introduce but is gathering pace. In part the introduction of this funding has coincided with the increased age range for the requests for an Education health and care plan, and this may have reduce the demand on this budget.

This funding is in addition to the Early Support Places funded for Rowland Hill, Pembury and Woodlands Park, which is on a separate line on the high needs block totalling 255K. There are **also** Early Support Places in Broadwater Farm, Stonecroft, Woodside, Triangle and Park Lane, totalling approximately 110K.

These places are also be paid from the inclusion fund, but for transparency this funding will be moved to the Early Support line of 255K totalling now 365K.

The budget for inclusion top up is 395K per annual, with a range of financial support per child up to the value of £3,938.70 per year. To date there have been 20 requests for support, or which 5 were returned for more information, and 15 were agreed. The reviews are coming back to panel this term and are showing impact of children having the funding, and having their additional needs met.

The majority of the requests for support are for children who are attending private and voluntary settings, and there have been limited numbers of requests from in borough maintained nurseries or those over borough boundaries. The majority of the requests have been supported by the early years inclusion team (Area Senco's). Following feedback, the method to request the top up will be reviewed, as some settings have reported that the mechanism is too time complex and off putting as a result.

The requests to date have totalled approximately 60K of the 395K with only 4 months remaining from the financial year.

If all the Early Support places are to be funded from this line, this will reduce the fund to 285K. Given this fund has only just started and is gathering pace slowly, the fund will be temporarily reduced to 200K

It is proposed that the majority of this budget is maintained, but reduced by 85K for 17/18. This budget will be under spent at year end for 2017-2018 and reviewed again in 2018.

Summary of proposals:

| Budget Area | Proposed Reduction |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Language and Autism Team | 100K |
| SEN Contingency | 200K |
| Early Years Top Up | 85K |
| Total Reduction | 385K |

3 Strategic Review of the High Needs Block Grant

Each local authority has been given a grant to assist with the strategic review of the high needs spend. The grant for Haringey is 111K. The high needs block contains a range of commissioned services which require review for cost effectiveness and value for money e.g. visual support services, speech and language therapy.

It is proposed that this grant is used to employ a commissioner on a short term contract to review the commissioned services within the high needs block and put contracts in place. This would also be an opportunity to progress the commissioning of school places for those with social emotional and mental health needs and review the needs and bands of those children in specialist provisions.

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