



Schools Forum

Wednesday, 26 February 2020 4.00 p.m.  
Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R', is written over a grey rectangular stamp.

**Chief Executive**

*Please contact Ann Jones - Tel: 0151 511 8276 or email:  
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.  
The next meeting of the Forum is to be confirmed.*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Part I**

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*In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.*

**SCHOOLS FORUM**

*At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Wednesday, 15 January 2020 at the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present:

A. Jones, Democratic Services, HBC  
 A. McIntyre, Education, Inclusion & Provision, HBC  
 A. Jones, Financial Management, HBC  
 N Shafiq, Financial Management, HBC  
 R. Sprigings, Financial Management, HBC  
 K. Landrum, (Chair) Primary School with a Nursery Representative  
 A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative  
 J. O'Connor, PVI Representative  
 N. Hunt, Pupil Referral Unit Representative  
 J. Wilson, Secondary Governor Representative  
 A. Sheppard, VA Schools Representative  
 J. McConville, Secondary Academy Representative  
 H. Austin, Community Special Schools Representative  
 L. Roberts, Small Primary Representative  
 E. Hall, All Through Schools Representative (Sub)

*Action*

SCF18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Thalia Bell, Kathryn Albiston, Ian Critchley, Jackie Coughlan and Simon Corner.

SCF19 MINUTES

The minutes from the meetings held on 16 October 2019 and 11 December 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

SCF20 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG) FORECAST OUTTURN 2019/20

The Forum received a report which gave the DSG forecast outturn for 2019-20 (as at 09.12.19) for the four schools blocks: Schools Block, Central School Services Block (CSSB), Early Years Block and High Needs Block. Members were provided with a detailed breakdown for each which was appended to the report.

Officers advised that the CSSB overspend was likely to be offset by the underspends as described in paragraph 3.2. In response to a query, suspension costs were explained – only in exceptional circumstances would these

be reimbursed by the Authority as schools were expected to include this in their own insurance policies.

It was noted that the overspends in Early Years Block and High Needs Block were likely to change, as outlined in the report. Overall Members noted that the forecast outturn for 2019-20 at the present time was £374,027 over budget.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

#### SCF21 SCHOOLS BLOCK FUNDING FOR 2020/21

The Forum received a report which presented the Schools Block Funding for 2020-21. It was reported that the Dedicated Schools Grant settlement was announced on 19 December as a total of £92,581,025 for 2020-21, an increase of £5,649,868 on the previous year.

Officers tabled the indicative allocations to schools and the proposed de-delegation budgets for 2020-21, as these were not available at the time of writing the report.

The Forum was asked to agree the level of Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) at this meeting and maintained schools representatives were asked to decide which de-delegated budgets they wished to fund for 2020-21. The Forum agreed that the MFG could be set at 1.84% and maintained representatives agreed to the de-delegations for 2020-21, as proposed.

It was noted that the indicative Schools Block Budgets for 2020-21 would be emailed to all schools following the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) notes the report;
- 2) agrees that the Minimum Funding Guarantee be set at 1.84% to the Schools Block funding formula; and
- 3) agrees to fund the following de-delegated budgets in 2020-21: Schools Contingency, Staff Responsibility, FSM Eligibility, Financial Management, Capital Works, Health and Safety and Dismissals.

Financial  
Management,  
HBC

#### SCF22 HIGH NEEDS COMMISSIONING TEAM PRESENTATION

The Forum received a presentation from Claire Gurney, from the newly implemented High Needs

Commissioning Team, who provided an overview of the progress and work of the team to date.

Members were advised that the aim of the Commissioning Team was to improve educational, health and emotional wellbeing outcomes for children with a Special Educational Need and/or Disability (SEND) in Halton.

Information was provided on: the purpose of the Team, which now had a full complement of staff; SEND placements; residential and fostering placements; education placements; the commissioning cycle; monitoring processes of individual schools and the challenges faced overall. The ongoing and future plans were also outlined.

The Forum highlighted and discussed the challenges faced by schools with regards to the perceptions and expectations of parents with a child with SEND.

It was commented that it was crucial to improve the quantity, quality and type of provision on offer within the Borough, so that out of Borough placements could be brought back into the Borough and future new placements could remain in the Borough.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and comments made be noted.

### SCF23 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF HIGH NEEDS

The Forum received a progress report on the independent review of high needs provision in Halton.

This was further to the report submitted to the October meeting of the Forum on the progress each of the three workstreams had made. Previously December 2019 had been set as a target for the completion of each of the three workstreams. However, given a number of local developments, the scale and complexity of the task and the need to ensure participation by all stakeholders in the proposed redesign and the sustainability of any future changes, the date for completion had been reviewed and the revised indicative target date was now March 2020.

It was noted that the findings would then be reported to the Senior Management Team of the Council for consideration after which a report would then be produced for: the Executive Board of the Council; the Health and Wellbeing Board; and the SEND Strategic Board. If the

recommendations in the report were agreed, formal consultation on the revised arrangements would then be undertaken.

It was reported that there had been a number of issues that had emerged as part of the review and redesign which Schools Forum may wish to consider and take a view on, so that changes could be made for the 2020-21 financial year. In summary these were:

- a) the proposal that funding of the Psychology Service be transferred to the High Needs budget and cease to be a traded service;
- b) the proposal for full funding to all schools (which would see a significant increase for all) with no transfer to High Needs; and
- c) the proposal for a different way of funding the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

The report provided details of these and Forum Members discussed them in detail, with Officers providing responses to queries made.

A decision was requested regarding the funding of the Educational Psychology Service at this meeting; the Forum agreed that the current traded element of the service could be funded through the High Needs budget so that all schools could access support. Schools would also be provided with the opportunity to buy additional Educational Psychology support and should sufficient requests be received, additional staff would need to be employed.

With regards to the PRU proposal, the Forum was advised that this would be presented at the Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers (HASH) meeting in February and the outcome of this would be reported to the February meeting of the Schools Forum. The Forum was advised that there would be no transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2020/2021. A letter would be sent to all schools informing them of the reason for this change and strongly encouraging them to invest in increasing support for children and young people with SEND.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) notes the report;

Operational  
Director -  
Education,  
Inclusion and

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2) supports the progress of the revision and redesign of High Needs;</li><li>3) agrees to the funding of the Educational Psychology Service; and</li><li>4) requests a further report be submitted at the next Schools Forum meeting.</li></ol> | Provision |
|---|-----------|

*Meeting ended at 6.00 p.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Schools Forum

**DATE:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Finance Officer

**SUBJECT:** DSG forecast outturn for 2019-20

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report to the Schools Forum the DSG forecast outturn for 2019-20 as at 11/02/20.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 2.1 The report is noted.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Schools Block**

The Schools Block must be fully devolved to mainstream primary and secondary schools by use of the approved funding formula, with the exception of the agreed transfer to the High Needs Block. For 2019-20 this transfer was agreed at 1%, which equates to £869,312 with the balance being fully devolved through the formula.

### **3.2 Central School Services Block**

We are still expecting the CSSB to come in over budget by £47,300 due to the reimbursement of suspension costs. We are expecting to underspend on the contribution to the Safeguarding post and the Premature Retirement budgets which offsets some of the overspend on the Staff Responsibilities budget. The Schools Contingency budget is being shown as fully spent as this is expected with the business cases submitted for Schools Forum consideration for financial assistance.

### **3.3 Early Years Block**

At this point in time we are forecasting to come in under budget by £351,256, an increase of £395,106 since the last DSG outturn report. This is because the actual spend on Spring Term free entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 years olds is a lot less than anticipated. We are also seeing underspends in areas such as staffing, supplies & services and EY contingency which totals £137,622. Using the January EY census data we are forecasting a DSG adjustment in July 2020 of a clawback of £60,464 in relation to the grant funding for 2019-20.

The underspend on Early Years Block will be ring-fenced and will be used in the 2020-21 budget calculations.

3.4 High Needs Block

The forecast outturn position is an overspend of £312,694. This overspend has reduced from the previously reported overspend position by £328,814 and is mainly due to a reduction in the forecast spend on Independent Special Schools and Inter Authority Recoupment. However, whilst the forecast overspend has reduced from last month, these are still the key areas of overspend which, along with Top-Up Funding, have a combined forecast overspend of £1,019,834. The Specialist Teams and Inclusion Division staffing are generally coming in under budget at a combined total of £209,325 which, along with the High Needs Contingency of £497,815 has reduced the forecast overspend.

3.5 Reserves

The balance carried forward from 2018-19 is £347,563 to support areas that are coming in over budget.

3.6 Summary

We are forecasting our outturn at £338,824 under budget for 2019-20 based on current information. We have built in all known and expected costs. Monthly monitoring of expenditure and forecast outturn is continuing and is being discussed with Senior Managers on a regular basis.

The current forecast equates to 0.30% of the overall DSG allocation to Halton.

The detailed breakdown for all four blocks is attached at Appendix A.

**4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 An in-year overspend against the DSG in excess of our carried forward balance will have first call against our grant allocation for 2020-21.

**5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**5.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

It is essential that schools and education support services receive sufficient funding to allow them to support all children and young people.

**5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None.

**5.3 A Healthy Halton**

None.

**5.4 A Safer Halton**

None.

**5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 The outturn currently forecast will undoubtedly change as so much of the central expenditure is based upon demand which can change from day to day. Stringent measures and monitoring are in place to minimise spending, subject to the LA and all schools and academies working together.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The Local Authority must discharge its statutory responsibilities in relation to all schools and settings.

## DSG Forecast Outturn for 2019-20

As at 11-02-20

Summary	Original budget	Current budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
Schools Block	£ 86,061,846	£ 86,061,846	£ 86,061,846	-£	0
Central Schools Services Block	£ 667,546	£ 564,600	£ 611,900	-£	47,300
Early Years Block	£ 9,631,209	£ 9,817,365	£ 9,466,110	£	351,256
High Needs Block	£ 14,836,285	£ 14,836,285	£ 15,148,979	-£	312,694
DSG carry forward (central)	£ 347,563	£ 347,563	£ -	£	347,563
<b>Total DSG</b>	<b>£ 111,544,449</b>	<b>£ 111,627,659</b>	<b>£ 111,288,835</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>338,824</b>

0.30%

**Schools Block**

Primary (before de-delegation)	£ 44,705,521	£ 44,705,521	£ 44,705,521	£	0
Secondary (before de-delegation)	£ 41,356,325	£ 41,356,325	£ 41,356,326	-£	1
<b>Total Schools Block</b>	<b>£ 86,061,846</b>	<b>£ 86,061,846</b>	<b>£ 86,061,846</b>	<b>-£</b>	<b>0</b>

**Central Schools Services Block**

Safeguarding post contribution	£ 47,100	£ 47,100	£ 35,500	£	11,600
Licences	£ 102,360	£ 102,360	£ 102,360	£	-
Teachers Panel	£ 19,460	£ 19,460	£ 19,460	£	-
Premature Retirement costs	£ 100,000	£ 100,000	£ 67,725	£	32,275
Transfer to High Needs Block	£ 102,946	£ -	£ -	£	-
Staff Responsibilities (de-del)	£ 25,470	£ 25,470	£ 120,533	-£	95,063
FSM Eligibility contribution (de-del)	£ 6,520	£ 6,520	£ 6,520	£	-
Dismissals Costs (de-del)	£ 127,110	£ 127,110	£ 127,110	£	-
Schools Contingency (de-del)	£ 198,780	£ 198,780	£ 198,780	£	-
De-delegated income	-£ 357,880	-£ 357,880	-£ 357,880	£	-

**Former ESG Retained Duties**

Revenue budget preparation/Formulation and review of LA schools funding formula	£ 80,660	£ 80,660	£ 80,660	£	-
Director of children's services/Planning for the education service as a whole	£ 88,360	£ 88,360	£ 87,096	£	1,264
Admissions service contribution	£ 8,430	£ 8,430	£ 8,430	£	-
SACRE	£ 2,910	£ 2,910	£ 2,910	£	-
Investigation of Complaints contribution	£ 7,610	£ 7,610	£ 7,610	£	-
Administrative costs and overheads	£ 107,710	£ 107,710	£ 107,710	£	-

**Former ESG General Duties**

Budgeting and accounting functions relating to m:	£ 21,000	£ 21,000	£ 21,000	£	-
Asset Management contribution	£ 46,560	£ 46,560	£ 43,936	£	2,624
Health & Safety contribution	£ 60,000	£ 60,000	£ 60,000	£	-
De-delegated income	-£ 127,560	-£ 127,560	-£ 127,560	£	-

<b>Total Central Schools Services Block</b>	<b>£ 667,546</b>	<b>£ 564,600</b>	<b>£ 611,900</b>	<b>-£</b>	<b>47,300</b>
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**Early Years Block**

Nursery Schools	£ 1,007,757	£ 1,007,757	£ 1,030,981	-£	23,224
Nursery Units	£ 463,745	£ 463,745	£ 463,745	£	-
PVI - 3 & 4 yo provision	£ 6,274,521	£ 6,274,521	£ 6,045,089	£	229,432
Early Years Pupil Premium	£ 143,180	£ 143,180	£ 143,180	£	-
Disability Access Fund	£ 45,510	£ 45,510	£ 45,510	£	-
2 yo provision	£ 1,421,035	£ 1,421,040	£ 1,413,614	£	7,426
EYFS Business Rates	£ 24,210	£ 24,210	£ 24,210	£	-
EY Inclusion Funding	£ 40,000	£ 40,000	£ 24,973	£	15,027
Staffing - 2, 3 & 4 yo provision	£ 166,370	£ 166,370	£ 142,479	£	23,891
Supplies & Services - 2, 3 & 4 yo provision	£ 40,240	£ 40,240	£ 2,000	£	38,240
Contribution to IWIST	£ 50,000	£ 50,000	£ 50,000	£	-
EY contingency	-£ 45,359	£ 140,793	£ 80,329	£	60,464
Estimated final budget adjustment (Jul 20) - not yet calculated	£ -	£ -	£ -	£	-

<b>Total Early Years Block</b>	<b>£ 9,631,209</b>	<b>£ 9,817,365</b>	<b>£ 9,466,110</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>351,256</b>
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High Needs Block									
Special Schools & Academies	£	5,097,422	£	5,097,422	£	5,097,422	£	-	
Resource Bases	£	1,378,478	£	1,378,478	£	1,378,478	£	-	
PRU	£	1,500,000	£	1,500,000	£	1,500,000	£	-	
Top-up funding	£	1,000,000	£	1,000,000	£	1,209,622	-£	209,622	
Special Schools Equipment	£	20,000	£	20,000	£	20,000	£	-	
Specialist Provision:									
Visually Impaired	£	113,930	£	113,930	£	70,722	£	43,208	
Cognition & Learning	£	119,650	£	119,650	£	108,292	£	11,358	
Communication, Language & ASD	£	105,310	£	105,310	£	96,747	£	8,563	
Hearing Impaired	£	195,970	£	195,970	£	225,873	-£	29,903	
Home Tuition	£	286,340	£	286,340	£	180,911	£	105,429	
Education Psychology Service	£	107,950	£	107,950	£	144,350	-£	36,400	
Independent Special Schools	£	2,412,450	£	2,412,450	£	3,023,625	-£	611,175	
Inter-Authority Recoupment	£	175,000	£	175,000	£	374,037	-£	199,037	
Post 16 Provision	£	969,000	£	969,000	£	933,887	£	35,113	
Behaviour Support Team	£	318,740	£	318,740	£	328,283	-£	9,543	
HN Contingency	£	497,815	£	497,815	£	-	£	497,815	
Inclusion Division staffing	£	538,230	£	538,230	£	456,730	£	81,500	
<b>Total High Needs Block</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>14,836,285</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>14,836,285</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>15,148,979</b>	<b>-£</b>	<b>312,694</b>	

**REPORT TO:** Schools Forum

**DATE:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Senior Finance Officer

**SUBJECT:** Early Years Block funding for 2020-21

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report to the Schools Forum the current position on Early Years funding for 2020-21.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

2.1 The report is noted.

2.2 That the centrally retained budgets be agreed.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Background**

Halton moved to the new Early Years National Funding Formula as required by the Department for Education in April 2017. We are, at the time of writing, preparing the 2020-21 funding formula.

### **3.2 Update**

We have an initial allocation of £9,981,564 for the provision of Early Years support. We are continuing to follow the Early Years Funding Formula with a universal base rate for all sectors, a deprivation factor using IDACI and the quality factor for staff across all sectors who are qualified at Level 5 and above. The maintained schools transitional protection has been set at an initial level of £102,258.

The January 2020 headcount has been used to calculate indicative budgets for providers which will be tabled at the meeting.

The funding received by Halton for 2 year old provision has increased from £5.28 in 2019-20 by the standard 8p to £5.36 for 2020-21. However, for 3 and 4 year old provision, the funding received by Halton has remained at the same level of £5.12 per hour.

The number of hours we have been funded for are 1,599,021 for 3 and 4 year olds, while the January census grossed up for the year only gives 1,586,889, a difference of 12,131. Therefore, in all calculations we need to build in a contingency for the repayment of 12,131 hours at £5.12 per hour.

The number of hours we have been funded for 2 year old provision is 279,112 and the January census grossed up for the year gives 276,015, a difference of 3,097. Again we need to build in a contingency for the repayment of 3,097 hours at £5.36 per hour.

As stated at a previous Schools Forum, we will ring-fence the Early Years Block underspend for 2019-20, carry it forward to 2020-21 and include this in the budget calculations. However, it must be noted that the carry forward will result in an increase in an hourly rate which is unlikely to be sustainable in future years.

### 3.3 Centrally Retained Budgets

The following are the budgets we are proposing to retain centrally, with their comparison to 2019-20.

	2020-21	2019-20
Staffing (3&4 year old plus 2 year old)	£169,350	£166,370
Supplies and Services (3&4yo plus 2yo)	£6,000	£37,240
Premises costs	£24,210	£24,210
Transport costs	£1,000	£3,000
Contribution to the Early Intervention Team	£50,000	£50,000
Early Years Pupil Premium	£142,773	£143,175
Disability Access Fund	£53,505	£45,510
EY SEN Inclusion Fund	£40,000	£40,000

Early Years Pupil Premium and Disability Access Fund are not counted as centrally retained budgets for the pass-through calculation as they are fully devolved to providers throughout the year. For 2020-21 we have reduced the centrally retained budgets by £30,260 (excluding EYPP and DAF) in order to maximise the allocation to providers.

The initial grant funding for 3 and 4 year old provision totals £8,186,988. The elements of the above centrally retained budgets relating to 3&4 year old provision total £246,162. This is well within the maximum of 5% allowed in the regulations.

The initial grant funding for 2 year old provision is £1,496,040. The elements relating to centrally retained budgets for 2 year old provision total £44,398. There is no maximum for centrally retained budgets for 2 year old provision within the regulations.

We are required to get agreement to the centrally retained budgets for 2020-21.

## 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 We are required to pass through a minimum of 95% of DSG Early Years Block funding for 3 and 4 year old free entitlement to providers. The initial budgets must be notified to providers by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 for

the 2020-21 financial year. We will endeavour to notify providers earlier than that.

Unlike the Schools Block element of DSG, the Early Years Block allocation is updated throughout the financial year it relates to and again in the following financial year. The funding formula must be based on the estimated hours set by the Department for Education which can be different to local estimates. We therefore may not receive grant allocation for costs incurred until the following financial year.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **5.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

It is essential that schools and education support services receive sufficient funding to allow them to support all children and young people.

### **5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None.

### **5.3 A Healthy Halton**

None.

### **5.4 A Safer Halton**

None.

### **5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 There is a risk that if the funding formula based on estimated hours given by the DfE does not reasonably reflect the actual provision we may be paying providers more funding than we actually receive in grant income. Although we should receive funding in the following financial year in such cases, the cashflow of the Council will be affected.

## **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The Local Authority must discharge its statutory responsibilities in relation to all schools and settings.

**REPORT TO:** Schools Forum

**DATE:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Senior Finance Officer

**SUBJECT:** High Needs Block funding for 2020-21

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report to the Schools Forum the High Needs Block funding for 2020-21.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 2.1 The report is noted.
- 2.2 The centrally retained budgets are agreed.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Grant settlement**

The Dedicated Schools Grant settlement was announced on 19<sup>th</sup> December giving a total of £19,063,244 for the High Needs Block for 2020-21 which is an increase of £2,292,555 from 2019-20.

From this figure, £2,906,662 is being recouped by the ESFA for commissioned places in special academies and some independent special schools. This leaves £16,156,582 High Needs Block that will be paid to Halton Borough Council.

### **3.2 Current position**

Due to the earlier date of the Schools Forum, at the time of writing the High Needs budgets have not been finalised. Therefore the budgets for Resource Bases, Special Schools, PRU, Top-up funding and Centrally Retained provisions will be tabled at the meeting.

### **3.3 Resource Base Funding**

As in previous years, per place funding is set at £6,000 per filled place where the pupil is on roll at the school offering the Resource Base place and £10,000 per place for vacant places and places filled by pupils on roll at another school.

### **3.4 Special Schools and PRU**

The per place funding continues at £10,000 for each commissioned place, irrespective of whether that place is filled or not. Top-up funding is paid for each learner for the days on roll.

3.5 Top-up funding  
Top-up funding is continuing and budgets will be tabled at the meeting.

3.6 Centrally retained budgets  
As in previous years, we wish to retain the some funding to provide support to schools. The centrally retained budget for 2019-20 is shown below. The budgets for 2020-21 are still to be finalised and will be tabled at the meeting.

	2019-20
Staffing	£1,313,800
Supplies & Services	£102,820
Independent Special Schools	£2,412,450
Inter Authority Recoupment	£175,000
Post 16 Provision	£969,000
Specialist Equipment	£20,000
Top-up funding contingency	£1,000,000
SEND Commissioner	£50,770
SEMH Team	£255,870
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,362,580</b>

#### 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Whilst we have received a significant increase in our High Needs Block allocation for 2020-21, there are still budgetary pressures in this area. As well as on-going pressures on the Independent Special Schools, Inter Authority Recoupment and Top-up funding budgets, as we start new initiatives aiming to reduce expenditure in the longer-term, in the short-term these will add to the pressure on this block.

#### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

##### 5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

It is essential that schools and education support services receive sufficient funding to allow them to support all children and young people.

##### 5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None.

##### 5.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

##### 5.4 A Safer Halton

None.

##### 5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 These budgets need to continue to be closely monitored to avoid going over budget.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The Local Authority must discharge its statutory responsibilities in relation to all schools and settings.

**REPORT TO:** Schools Forum

**DATE:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Senior Finance Officer

**SUBJECT:** Central School Services Block 2020-21

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report to the School Forum on the Central School Services Block for 2020-21.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 The report is noted.
- 2.2 The budgets are agreed.

## 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Central School Services Block (CSSB) is now a separate block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. For 2020-21 the grant allocation is £665,450. We are required to inform and seek approval from Schools Forum for budgets funded from this block. De-delegated budgets that sit within this block were approved at the January meeting.

- 3.2 Centrally retained budgets  
Below are the centrally retained budgets funded from the CSSB with their comparison to 2019-20:

	<u>2020-21</u>	<u>2019-20</u>
Contribution to Safeguarding post	£37,680	£47,100
Teacher's Panel	£19,460	£19,460
Licences	£104,480	£102,357
Premature Retirements	£100,000	£100,000

From the former Education Services Grant retained element funding now part of the CSSB allocation:

Staffing	£192,800	£187,960
Central Recharges	£109,860	£107,710

- 3.3 The Contribution to Safeguarding post is an historic commitment. The DfE have started to reduce the funding for such historic commitments and has reduced it by 20% for 2020-21. The post is currently occupied on a part time basis so no additional funding is required.

The Licences budget is to meet the cost of the school licences purchased centrally by the ESFA and recharged to local authorities.

We have been notified of the charge for 2020-21 which is an increase of more than 2% on the 2019-20 charge.

The Premature Retirement budget is £501,930 of which the DSG contributes £100,000.

3.4 The former ESG retained element funding contributes to the cost of Financial Management posts, Senior Management posts, Investigation of Complaints and SACRE plus associated administrative costs and overheads.

3.5 We therefore have an unallocated balance of £101,170 which we propose to transfer to the High Needs Block to support the budgetary pressures on that block.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 If funding is refused for any budget the Council will need to decide whether it can source other funding to support the service(s). All services funded by the CSSB are in accordance to the regulations.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **5.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

Support services for children in schools is directly impacted by de-delegated budget decisions.

##### **5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

None.

##### **5.3 A Healthy Halton**

None.

##### **5.4 A Safer Halton**

None.

##### **5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

#### **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 There is a risk to the Council that funding for staff and services in place to provide support to children in schools may be reduced should representatives on Schools Forum wish to reject any budget.

#### **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The local authority must discharge its statutory responsibilities in relation to all schools and settings.

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Schools Forum</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>26 February 2020</b>
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	<b>Operational Director – Education, Inclusion and Provision</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>High Needs – Pupil Referral Unit</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>Borough wide</b>

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To set out the changes proposed changes to the operating model of the Pupil Referral Unit and seeks School Forum support for the revised funding arrangements.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 2.1 **Support the proposed changes to the operating model of the PRU and the funding of two inclusion places per school per annum; and**
- 2.2 **Support the contribution from High Needs budget of £100k for the provision of a PRU Outreach Service.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In recent years the high levels of secondary exclusions has been restricting the ability of the PRU to provide preventative placements and use their expertise to provide outreach support to schools. The PRU has also seen an increasing number of pupils requiring assessment for an EHCP and very few students on engagement placements successfully returning to their mainstream school. This was acknowledge in the High Needs Review and one of the key recommendations was to change the operating model of the PRU and its relationships to schools so that it can maximise the integration of pupils back into mainstream schools.
- 3.2 A Task and Finish Group, facilitated by Peopletoo, with stakeholder representatives has now developed a plan which will allow the PRU to work differently with schools. This new approach should allow better more consistent planning and support for schools with students with additional needs and remove duplication or gaps in provision. It is also aimed at reducing challenging behaviour and exclusions. Finally it encourages schools to utilise the good quality vocational offer provided by the PRU.
- 3.3 To improve the governance arrangements at the PRU it is proposed that the instrument of governance is revised. A revised instrument has been developed and includes the following:

- An independent Chair and Vice Chair;
  - Representation from all secondary schools;
  - Revised code of conduct with provision to address conflicts of interest; and
  - A key priority is to reintegrate pupils back to mainstream.
- 3.4 Under the new arrangements termly meetings will take place with each secondary school. These meetings will include the appropriate school representative/s and a member of the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Service, Specialist Teaching Service, School Assessment Co-ordinator and proposed new PRU Outreach Team.
- 3.5 The school will set out the key challenges faced in effectively supporting students with special educational needs and/or challenging behaviour. The LA team would provide advice, support, challenge and guidance a co-ordinated plan would be developed per school per term.
- 3.6 To promote greater inclusion and reintegration and try and reduce the risk of permanent exclusion, it is proposed that using the funding allocated from the High Needs budget for PRU each school be allocated two inclusion places. Each secondary school will be allocated two inclusion places per term for up to 12 weeks. For each placement the school will need to sign a Service Level Agreement with the PRU. These places are contingent on the school commitment to reintegrate each inclusion student.
- 3.7 Places will be funded at the full top up rate through the High Needs budget. A school will lose a place if they permanently exclude a student, however, following the successful reintegration of a student a school can then use the free place for another student.
- 3.8 Additional places can still be purchased from the PRU if available.
- 3.9 Under the current arrangements few pupils return to their mainstream school after an engagement placement. To address this issue it is proposed that an Outreach Service led by the PRU is developed. This service would focus on reintegrating pupils back to school and provide support. It is proposed that the High Needs budget contribute £100k to the development of this new service. Halton Association of Secondary Schools have met and support this development. They will meet again to consider whether from their own resources they wish to further enhance the level of Outreach support that can provided through the PRU.
- 3.10 The sustainability of the vocational provision provided by the PRU at Astmoor, @37 was discussed at Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers. It was explained that the provision was under used with some schools choosing to place their students elsewhere. Schools were reminded that @37 was run by the PRU and located in a separate specially adapted business unit at Astmoor and provided good quality assured vocational provision. Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers

committed to support @37 and utilise the provision when seeking a vocational placement for a student.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The revised model aims at identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or challenging behaviour earlier and determining the most appropriate support. Through this approach it is hoped that the PRU can provide more preventative support, the level of exclusions will reduce and there will be less need for expensive packages of support for pupils and a reduction in out of borough placements.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 6.1 The PRU is currently operating over capacity and is limited in the support it can provide to schools to prevent exclusion. Lack of reintegration restricts the places available for preventative work with students. The collaborative changes proposed in the new operating model, along with the investment in a more preventative approach to supporting pupils is aimed at addressing these issues and ensuring students needs can be more appropriately met locally earlier.

## **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 7.1 These changes are aimed at improving the outcome of secondary students with special educational needs and/ or challenging behaviour.