

SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action



For Information



Brief Description of Item (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

Using the reports presented under agenda items 9, 10 and 11, as well as this report, the Business Advisor (Schools) will explain the planned creation of additional SEND places (an additional 120 places in each of the next 3 academic years), how these are to be funded from the High Needs Block and the wider implications on the DSG. It is understood that the Schools Forum will wish to fully consider all implications of what has been presented and will make final recommendations on the allocation of the 2017/18 DSG in January 2017. The Schools Forum is asked to give its outline agreement now however, for the first set of 120 places to be funded from the High Needs Block, to enable these places to be established for January 2017.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

A presentation was given to the Schools Forum on 18 May 2016 on the 360 places. An update was provided to the meeting 20 July.

Background / Context

Members will find it useful to refer to Documents GG (indicative position of the 2017/18 DSG) and GH (status of National Funding Formula proposals for the Schools and High Needs Blocks) especially in considering this matter.

For additional reference, the minutes of the 18 May 2016 Schools Forum meeting record:

"The PowerPoint presentation was the focus of this item. It provided an update on the current position of reviews and other activities, especially focusing on the issue of the sufficiency of places. The Deputy Director explained how the data evidences the higher proportions of pupils in Bradford by primary need compared with the national average (e.g. over x2 the national average for Autism, x2 the national average for sensory impairment, x3 for physical difficulties) and why 360 more specialist provision places are forecasted to be required by 2018/19 in response to demographic growth. 68 places are needed for September 2016. The presentation outlined actions in the urgent short (agreeing how we can access with interim agreements existing capacities to provide for 68 more places), medium (the development of early years provision through a partnership with nursery schools and special school satellite provisions to access mainstream accommodation) and long (the establishment of at least 2 new special schools) term. All these actions have financial implications for the DSG from 2016/17 as the High Needs Block is the source of revenue funding for places. It was explained that work is taking place to 'triangulate' all this and to put arrangements in place. The Authority will need to talk to the Forum further about funding. The Deputy Director explained that this is a major challenge. She also stated that she appreciates concerns that have been expressed previously by the Forum (and by other groups) that the forecasted numbers of additional required places may be understated; what is presented here is a starting position. She also stressed that the Authority will need the support of the Schools Forum and schools to manage this work going forward".

The Position of DSG Reserves (One Off Monies)

The additional cost of places for the period January to March 2017 (as outlined below – an estimated cost of £0.63m) will fall to the 2016/17 High Needs Block and DSG reserves. A full picture of the expected 2016/17 DSG spending position, over and under spends, and one off monies, will be presented to the Schools Forum in December. On current estimates, we anticipate that the High Needs Block specifically, before the provision of 120 places for 3 months, will overspend against the planned budget in this year by £1.0m, due to places pressure (the 68 immediate places referred to on 18 May plus out of authority and independent placements) but also from over spends in other pressure areas, including in home tuition (hospital placements). This is an estimate only, which will be firmed up over the autumn term. Indicatively then, the High Needs Block is estimated to overspend in total by £1.63m including the 3 month provision for the 120 places. We would look to under spends in other areas of the DSG, and to the DSG reserves, to manage this over spending and avoid the requirement to top slice the 2017/18 DSG.

The Schools Forum has established a £3m resilience reserve within the DSG. It was reported to the Forum on 20 July that, following the confirmation of 2015/16 end of financial year balances, a total additional sum of £1.6m is also available and uncommitted within the DSG this year. £1.2m of this comes from an under spending in the DSG's previously earmarked resources for the development of the 2 year old offer.

Details of the Item for Consideration

The District's special schools are at full capacity. During the next three years however, it is projected that a minimum of 360 additional specialist places will be required. This equates to 120 places each academic year starting in 2016/17. These projections are based on predicted population growth (36 places a year) and an allocation of places for those children and young people who are likely to require a change in provision that will be identified during the statutory assessment process (84 a year based on 15/16 figures). In the long term, the Local Authority anticipates that a free school or schools will be established in the Bradford District. However, these will not be open to pupils before September 2019. The Local Authority needs to put in place interim arrangements in order to create additional capacity within the District's specialist provisions in the short and medium terms to ensure that children and young people with SEND have access to appropriate educational provision. It is anticipated that the interim arrangements will cease at the point that new free school(s) are open to pupils.

The Authority is working to establish the first set of 120 places at January 2017; the second set from September 2017 and then the third set from September 2018.

For initial year 1 interim arrangements, the Local Authority would like to maximise the use of available accommodation in the District by establishing a partnership arrangement with existing special schools and settings with available accommodation, so that:

- the pupils will be on the roll of the special school,
- the special school will receive full additional funding for their places,
- the special school will employ additional staff,
- the staff and pupils will be located in satellite provision

A number of options and potential locations have been identified for year 1 interim provisions on this basis and initial approaches have been made. Between September and December the details of these arrangements will be developed in partnership with the identified schools and settings. The Authority is working to establish these provisions to admit pupils at January 2017. Further work is taking place to identify options for establishing further interim provisions in years 2 and 3. Further discussions are also taking place about the funding of any capital works that may be required, such as buildings remodelling for appropriate accessibility.

The DSG High Needs Block would finance the revenue cost of the additional places. The cost of 360 places is estimated as follows:

- Year 1 – 120 places at an average of £21,000 per place (£10,000 place; £11,000 plus). £2.52m.
- Year 2 – 240 places at an average of £21,000 per place. £5.04m
- Year 3 – 360 places at an average of £21,000 per place. £7.56m

The actual cost will vary from this estimate, for the position of a pupil on our Ranges Model (£11,000 is a prudent average) and for the timing of placements.

The estimated cost in 2016/17, which we would expect to be met by the 2016/17 DSG or by DSG reserves is:

- Year 1 – 120 places January to March 2017 £0.63m

The estimated cost in 2017/18, which we would expect to be met by the 2017/18 DSG allocation is:

- Year 1 – 120 places April to August 2017 £1.05m
- Years 1 & 2 – 240 places September 2017 – March 2018 £2.94m
- Total £3.99m

It is understood that the Schools Forum will wish to fully consider all implications of what has been presented and will make final recommendations on the allocation of the 2017/18 DSG in January 2017, hopefully with sight of national funding formula implications. The Schools Forum is asked to give its outline agreement now however, for the first set of 120 places to be funded from the High Needs Block, to enable these places to be established for January 2017.

The first set of places will add (estimated) £0.63m of spend in the High Needs Block in 2016/17 and £2.52m of spend in the 2017/18 DSG and on an on-going basis.

Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (if any)

The additional cost of places for the period January to March 2017 will fall to the 2016/17 DSG and DSG reserves. The on-going cost of additional places will be met from the on-going DSG allocation.

Recommendations

The Schools Forum is asked for its outline agreement for the first tranche of additional 120 SEND places to be funded from the High Needs Block, from January 2017 and on an on-going basis.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers *(where applicable)*

None

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