

REPORT TO: Schools Forum

DATE: 16th October 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Finance Officer

SUBJECT: High Needs Update 2018-19

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update Schools Forum on the final High Needs outturn for 2018-19

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

2.1 The report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 For 2018/19 the High Needs DSG was £241,786 over the allocated budget. The table below shows the level of spend against budget for the key areas.

Area	Original Budget	Actual Spend	Variance
Special Schools	£4.763m	£5.204m	-£441k
Top Up Funding	£2.672m	£2.029m	£643k
PRU	£1.500m	£1.716m	-£216k
Specialist Provision	£1.144m	£859k	£284k
Special Equipment	£20k	£2k	£18k
INMSS provision	£2.412m	£3.049m	-£636k
Inter-Authority	£175k	£400k	-225k
Post 16 provision	£769k	£807k	-£38k
Inclusion Division Staffing	£541k	£469k	£72k
HN Contingency	£296k	£0	£296k
Total	£14.292m	£14.534m	-£242k

3.2 The profile of expenditure on High Needs provision has changed over the last 12 months since the original budgets were set. As is the picture nationally we have seen a significant increase in our special school population both in the borough and out of the borough. This has meant that our four Halton special schools are providing places for many more children and young people than previously and are up to

maximum capacity. The increase in number and complexity of pupils has also had to be reflected in the special schools funding.

- 3.3 There has also been a significant overspend on the budgets for out of borough and independent provision due to the rise in demand for specialist places.
- 3.4 The underspend on Resource Provision is largely due to fact that there are vacant places at some of our bases. The Peopletoo Review identified that the needs of the children with SEND had changed over recent years and that in some cases the Resource Base provision no longer reflected these changes. Proposals are currently being developed to revise the Resource Base offer in Halton.
- 3.5 The changes to the allocation of top up funding for in 2018/2019, coupled with the fact that an increasing number of children and young people are being educated in specialist settings has led to an underspend on the top up funding budget. This is likely to change in future years as we build the capacity and support for all mainstream schools so that more pupils remain in a mainstream school with the appropriate support.
- 3.6 The PRU faced one of its highest levels of demand in 2018/2019 with many pupils remaining longer at the PRU than anticipated and increased exclusions addressing these issues is being.
- 3.7 Specialist Provision includes areas such as Visually Impaired, Cognition & Learning, Home Tuition, Educational Psychology and Behaviour Support Team. At year end the provision as a whole was under the allocated budget by £284k. This underspend is due to a mixture of staff savings, a conscious effort to only spend supplies and services budgets on essential items and there being less of a demand for Home Tuition than budgeted for.
- 3.8 The Inclusion Division Staffing area had a budget remaining of £72k. This is due to staff vacancies. The Inclusion Divisional Manager post became vacant in November and the SEND Commissioner was budgeted for full year but the appointment did not take effect until March 19.
- 3.9 The High Needs Contingency figure of £296k is Halton's allocation of the additional funding released from the DfE late in the year.
- 3.10 Schools and Schools Forum agreed in October 2017 to transfer 0.5% from Schools Block to High Needs to help alleviate some of the financial pressures placed upon this area. The amount of this transfer was £422k. Towards the end of 2018-19 the DfE issued further High Needs funding and Halton's allocation of this was £296k. The total High Needs budget for 2018/19 was £14.292m.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Given the increasing pressures placed on High Needs we have recognised that the need to provide accurate and timely information to Schools Forum. It has been agreed that Schools Forum will receive a DSG outturn report at every meeting.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

It is essential that schools 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 Given the level of public spending austerity since 2010 this is resulting in increased pressure on school budgets. Financial support is offered to schools and the Council will continue to monitor the level of DSG spend throughout the year to mitigate against the risk of overspend against available funding.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 8.1 None