



# Northumberland County Council

**Wellbeing and Community Health Services Group**  
**Education and Skills Service**

Agenda Item 7

## **SCHOOLS' FORUM**

**30 September 2020**

### **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn 2019-20**

#### **1. Purpose of the Report**

This report provides details of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) outturn position for 2019/20 to School Forum members, together with the implications of the outturn highlighted by significant cost pressures within the budget

#### **2. Recommendations**

Schools Forum is asked to:

- a) Approve that the overspend on the DSG for 2019/20 will have the first call on the DSG settlement for 2020/21;
- b) Approve the carry forward of the 2019/20 Trade Union Facility surplus of £46,738 in line with the report attached at Appendix A
- c) Note the ongoing monitoring of High Needs funding.

#### **3. Background**

At the Schools Forum meeting in January 2019 the budgets for each block within the DSG were set, with details for the Early Years & the High Needs blocks being agreed at the meeting in February 2019, figures as below:

<b>2019/20 DSG</b>	<b>2019/20 Allocations</b>	<b>Transfer to High Needs</b>	<b>Total (before de-delegation)</b>
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Central Schools Block</b>	3.128		3.128
<b>Early Years Block</b>	16.468		16.468
<b>High Needs Block</b>	33.202	1.796	34.998
<b>Schools Block</b>	179.724	(1.796)	177.928
<b>Total</b>	232.522		232.522

#### **4. Outturn Position 2019/20**

- 4.1 The latest monitoring report provided to Schools Forum was based upon the position at the end of December 2019 when an overspend of £0.765 million was predicted. The final

position for the 2019/20 financial year was an overspend of £0.607 million, a reduction of £0.158 million on the December 2019 forecast.

There has therefore been an overall reduction of £0.629 million in the deficit to be carried forward compared to the previous year

	<b>Dec 2019 (£m)</b>	<b>2019/20 outturn (£m)</b>	<b>Change (£m)</b>
<b>Central Schools block</b>	0.151	0.114	(0.037)
<b>Early Years block</b>	(0.055)	(0.078)	(0.023)
<b>High Needs block</b>	1.260	1.237	(0.023)
<b>Schools block</b>	(0.591)	(0.666)	(0.075)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.765</b>	<b>0.607</b>	<b>(0.158)</b>

(Note: an overspend is shown as a positive figure and an underspend a negative figure)

#### 4.2 Central Schools Block

The overspend of £0.114 million was due to:

- The cost of Independent School provision for 5 Looked after Children without an EHCP. While the costs are arising due to the associated education costs of the placements, the placements are required to meet the social care needs of the child, often when there is no suitable accommodation within the county.

#### 4.3 Early Years Block

The underspend of £0.078 million was largely due to:

- An underspend on the Early Years Disability Access Fund (DAF) of £0.058 million. The allocation for this funding is based upon data from DWP around eligible 3 and 4 year olds in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and not all eligible children have claimed their grant. This funding will be ringfenced

#### 4.4 High Needs Block

The overspend of £1.237 million in 2019/20, was largely due to:

- An overspend on Alternative provision for excluded pupils of £0.501 million due to a shortage in suitable provision and increased demand, some high cost placements had to be commissioned in some areas of the county. Pressures still remain in relation to longer term exclusions, however there 65 year 11 leavers due to leave provision in July 2020.
- An overspend of £0.413 million on Independent Special Schools. This is following an increase in placements by 14 over the last year. There are currently 186 placements being supported, up from 172 in 2018/19.
- An overspend of £0.539 million on special sixth form funding for August 2019 to March 2020. The funding was originally paid by via a grant direct to schools, however from August 2019 it was transferred into the High Needs Block element of the DSG. The funding for this block was already allocated out in full February 2019 and this resulted in additional budget pressure.

The corresponding budget was overspent by £2.040m in 2018/19, with an overall brought forward deficit of £1.236 million after other balances were offset from the other blocks. With a final year end position of £1.237 million at the end of 2019-20, this demonstrates that the

deficit has not increased during the year on the High Needs block, though it must be remembered this included the 1% (£1.796 million) transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. It should also be remembered that the transfer was reduced to 0.5% for the current financial year 2020/21.

### **Schools Block**

The Schools block underspent by £0.666 million due to:

- An underspend on the contingency fund of £0.637 million, whilst the budget was utilised to meet several smaller costs relating to schools that are now closed, there were no significant commitments across the year. The budget also increased following the closure of Haltwhistle Upper school as although the AWPU was re-distributed to follow the pupils, there is a refund on other factors including the lump sum.
- An underspend of £0.047 million on the Trade Union Facility Time balance is subject of a separate request to carry this forward, attached at Appendix A. The increased balance arose as the service received some backdated SLA income relating to the previous financial year.

## **5 Summary and Conclusions**

There has been an overall reduction of £0.629 million in the deficit to be carried forward to 20-21 compared to the previous year, this is as a result of underspends across the Schools Block and the Early Years Block. Whilst the High Needs Block has not added to the deficit from the previous year, it is noted that this was as a result of the funding transferred from the Schools Block to support the services.

There remain significant challenges in relation to the management of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), particularly pressures around High Needs. The Government has also announced greater scrutiny for those authorities who have deficits, where closer scrutiny was previously reserved for those authorities whose deficit balance was greater than 1% of the total DSG. For comparative purposes Northumberland's carry forward deficit figure of £0.607 million is currently 0.26% of the total DSG but this will continue to be closely monitored.

## SCHOOLS FORUM

30 September 2020

### HR Directorate -Trade Union Facility Time

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek approval from Schools Forum to carry forward the budget balance from 2019/20 to 2020/21.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools Forum members are recommended to read the report prior to the meeting and table any questions, preferably on advance or at the meeting. Schools Forum members are requested to support the proposal to carry forward the budget surplus of £46,738.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

Schools Forum has previously agreed that the money for Trade Union Facility Time budget should be de - delegated from First, Primary, Middle, High and Secondary Schools, and this means that these schools benefit from the services of county-wide Trades Union elected representatives. The budget is not de-delegated from maintained Special Schools or Academies.

The Facility Time SLA is designed to assist maintained Special Schools by protecting them against the possibility that one of their members of staff could be elected as a County Secretary of their Trades Union or Professional Association. Under such circumstances, the school would be obligated to release the member of staff to work in any school across the County and to pay the associated supply costs to replace them. Participating in the SLA would mean that the Council would meet those supply costs instead. Whereas none of the County Secretaries are currently employed in a Special School, this could potentially happen if one of their members of staff were to put themselves forward for the position, so in essence this SLA is an insurance policy against the potentially very significant costs that might be incurred in such an eventuality. Special Schools should also be aware that County representatives of a Trades Union or Professional Association will only be able to represent their members at e.g. a disciplinary or ill-health meeting if the school in which the member works has contributed to this SLA.

The Facility Time SLA is designed to assist Academies in a different way. As a separate employer, each Academy could be required to release for Facility Time a representative of each of the Trades Unions or Professional Associations to undertake Trades Union duties within their own Academy. Given the number of Trades Unions and Associations which are represented within the school workforce, this could cost a significant amount of money. Participation in the SLA allows the Academy to utilise the services of the elected County Secretaries of each Trades Union or Professional Association instead of their own elected representatives. In addition, for those Academies which participate in the SLA, the Council is prepared to pay the Academy for an agreed level of Supply Cover if one of their members of staff is elected as the County Secretary for that Trades Union or Professional Association and the Academy allows them to undertake that work not just within their Academy but for all the schools within the County.

#### 4. CURRENT POSITION

The budget for Facility Time is managed by the HR Service working in conjunction with trades union colleagues. Income is generated by encouraging academies to sign up and this has been moderately successful. However, further academisation in 2019/20 has resulted in a continuing reduction to the de-delegated budget.

Under these circumstances, it would be supportive if the Schools Forum could agree for the t balance of £46,738 to be carried forward to 2020/21. In return we would look to hold the de-delegated rate at £3.25 per pupil for 2021/22.

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