

Appendix A to Schools Forum High Needs Block Funding Report – This is a HNB T&F report from the meeting held on the 27 June 2013

Report for the High Needs Block Task and Finish Group on the SEN underspend the risks and proposals - For Action

Jaynn Taylor, Group Manager Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) and Education Support Services (ESS)

Executive Summary:

In the financial years 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 the SEN placements' budget has carried forward underspends as a result of the reduction in expensive out of borough day and residential placements for children and young people. This has been achieved because the SEN Team have worked closely with our special schools to develop their provisions to meet the needs of the most complex and challenging young people; with our mainstream schools to develop resourced provisions that meet the increasing demand for specialist provision and also with social care to provide local support services for families.

At the meeting in June 2013 Schools' Forum agreed a number of projects that would benefit from the additional one-off funding that this underspend could provide. The rationale for agreeing one-off projects is that it is unlikely that underspends will continue at a time when the budgets are under pressure from increased demands due to both the population increase and the continuing complexity of the children and young people.

Background:

Since 2005 the SEN strategy has been to reduce expensive out of borough specialist places by increasing parental confidence in local special schools, increase the funding available to mainstream schools by delegating SEN funding and developing resourced provisions to enable some children with severe and/or complex needs to attend a mainstream school.

Financial Year	SEN Placements Underspend	Recoupment Income Surplus	Total Underspend	Less Utilised	Less Commitments	Uncommitted Balance Carry forward
	£	£	£	£	£	£
2010-2011	755,000		755,000	289,200	300,000	165,800
2011-2012	500,600	215,300	715,900		715,900	0
2012-2013	1,034,800	402,900	1,437,700			1,437,700
Total	2,290,400	618,200	2,908,600	289,200	1,015,900	1,603,500

The SEN underspend carried forward was **£1,603,500**

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Proposals agreed in June 2013 are for the following projects:

Proposals Summary	
	£
1. Person centered training & support for schools for the development of Education, Health and Care plans	12,000
2. Person centered training & support for parents for the development of Education, Health and Care plans	3,000
3. Refurbishment of Hearing Impaired Special Resource Provision at Whitehall to increase year groups	23,550
4. Development of a new Special Resource Provision at Hillyfield Academy on the Aveling Park Site	45,000
5. Waltham Forest Dyslexia Association - Funding to support Waltham Forest Pupils	7,000
6. Project Search Job Coach	15,000
	105,550

Details are available in a separate document agreed by Schools' Forum on 12 June '13

Therefore the current SEN total underspend available is **£1,497,950**

Risks and Proposals for Remainder

Following the agreement to fund the above proposals there remains £1,497,950 available in the SEN underspend. However the local authority must also have a contingency plan in respect of risks identified below.

Identified Risks	
	£
1. Additional residential places – approximate cost per place £85k - £150k	100,000
2. In-year statements – element 3 funded from the day the pupil starts at all schools	100,000
3. Specialist Independent Provision for Post 16 & Post 19 pupils – approx. cost £45k - £120k	100,000
4. Additional learners in college places – element 3 funded from day pupil starts at college	100,000
5. Additional Educational Psychology assessments required to update statements for Post 16 / Post 19 pupils	£50,000
	£450,000

Accepting the above estimated contingency for the anticipated areas of risk would leave an available underspend of **£1,047,950**. It must be noted that this underspend is unlikely to be repeated and therefore any proposal accepted should be for projects that can be sustained from the available High Needs budget in future years.

Proposals

1. A significant risk to the High Needs block in future years will be the cost of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans if these are not limited to children with low incidence and high cost needs. The EHC plan will span the age range 0 – 25 years and give parents the right to Tribunal if the LA does not agree to initiate an EHC assessment once requested and if the LA wants to cease the EHC believing that the child has made significant progress. Waltham Forest like neighbouring boroughs is seeing rapid expansions in our schools and a corresponding increase in the numbers of children with special educational needs. It is crucial that mainstream schools have the skills and expertise to meet the needs of children who have low level, high incidence needs such as speech, language and communication, high functioning autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia and moderate hearing impairment from within their notional SEN funding without requesting a statutory assessment for an Education, Health and Care plan. Therefore to support individual and groups of schools develop both their internal expertise and

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their joint commissioning of specialist support I propose that we agree to fund SEN experts, one to work with each primary headteachers' area partnership group and one with the secondary headteachers' group for the academic year 2013/14. The cost would be approximately £50k per post x 4 = **£200,000**. The details re recruitment and JDs etc can be agreed with headteachers if the funding is agreed.

2. A second significant risk is the raising of the participation age and the change of funding in respect of young people with low incidence, high needs attending colleges and 6th Forms. Over the last 5 years Waltham Forest has reduced the numbers of children attending independent day and residential provision by increasing the number of places available in our special schools and opening resourced provisions in mainstream schools. In anticipation of the raising of the participation age and the increase in the numbers of young people with low incidence, high needs the LA has increased the numbers of places available at Post 16 in William Morris and put in a capital bid for Whitefield. This proposal is to provide start-up costs to open resource provisions for young people who wish to attend local colleges and 6th Forms. Chingford Academy, Heathcote and Highams Park already have resourced provisions that could be extended to accept pupils Post 16. No discussion has yet taken place with colleges or the remaining 6th Forms in respect of resourced provision, however I suggest that we agree to set aside **£200,000** to use as start-up costs for Post 16 resourced provisions.

3. This leaves an SEN underspend of **£647,950** to carry forward with any funding that is not needed to cover the identified risks. We know that High Needs budget will continue to be at risk of over-spending in the next 2 – 3 years in specific areas ie 2% annual growth in population and therefore 2% increase in numbers of high needs children, the low incidence, high needs children who are identified between 0 – 3 years including increase in number of 2 year olds in nurseries (extra 1,500 by September 2014), and young people Post 16 and Post 19 because these age groups have not previously been funded from this budget.

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Conclusions:

There is a large SEN underspend because of the success of the SEN strategy to reduce expensive out of borough places this should be invested in projects that will benefit children with special educational needs in Waltham Forest schools. It is important that any projects are either one-off or are able to be sustained from mainstream budgets as the underspend will not be repeated.

	£
Uncommitted Underspend	1,603,500
Less : Proposals agreed by Schools' Forum on 12 th June 2013	105,550
Less: Contingency for risks identified in this paper	450,000
Less: Proposals detailed in this paper	400,000
Less: Contingency carried forward to 2014/15	647,950
Total committed SEN Underspend	1,603,500

Recommendations:

The Task and Finish Group agree to release funding from the SEN underspend for the following projects:

1. Allocate a High Needs contingency for 2013/14 to cover the possible financial risks detailed above. Any underspend from this contingency to be carried forward to mitigate the risks to the High Needs budget in 2014/15 and 2015/16. Cost £450,000
2. Fund 4 SEN experts for the academic year 2013/14 to work with each primary area partnership and the secondary headteachers' group to develop the SEN expertise and commissioning skills necessary to meet the needs of high incidence, low needs pupils from the schools' notional SEN budgets. Cost £200,000
3. Start-up costs to develop resourced provisions in local colleges and 6th Forms for young people transferring from special schools and secondary resourced provisions. Cost £200,000
4. Carry forward an underspend to act as a contingency for the High Needs budget in 2014/15 and 2015/16. Cost £647,950

Total cost £1,047,950