

Bury Schools' Forum

20 October 2020

DSG Deficit Recovery – Schools' Forum Recommendations

Further to Items 10a and 10b, this paper aims to summarise the fundamental and critical considerations that Schools' Forum can make in their recommendations to support the DSG recovery.

The Cabinet report provided at 10a included the following items where Schools' Forum support is necessary to ensure the recovery plan is on track.

Reference to the Cabinet report is made to the relevant paragraph numbers for cross-checking tracking purposes.

Cabinet report paragraph 3.8: demonstrates how the High Needs Block of the DSG is deployed and confirms the investment being made, over the High Needs Block allocation, for 2020/21 which will see the deficit increase by a further £4.5m. It is expected the benefit of this in-borough investment will be realised in-year and into future years.

There are three areas in particular that are subject to review for DSG recovery, these are highlighted in the table at 3.8 and are broken down into detailed lines in the table at 3.9 as follows:

3.9 For transparency the lines highlighted above are detailed as follows:

1.2.5 SEND Support Services		Cost Code	
Central Recharges and Statutory Requirements	inc Bury Safeguarding Children's Board	FK10070	195,000
Additional Needs Team		FT10000	408,000
Sensory Support		FT30000	720,000
1.2.5 Total			1,323,000
1.2.7 Other Alternative Provision - Inclusion		Cost Code	
Secondary Inclusion Partnerships		FC80000	440,000
Secondary Inclusion Hubs	North: Elton, South: Philips, Central: Hazelwood	FT69200/300/400	360,000
Primary Inclusion Partnerships		FC90000	250,000
Primary Hub	Previously The Ark	FT61000	400,000
1.2.7 Total Inclusion Partnerships and Hubs			1,450,000
1.2.8 Support for Inclusion		Cost Code	
Sen Team		BE40000	255,000
16-19 Team		EL16190	56,000
Travellers Service		FQ84000	85,000
LAC Education		FT31000	200,000
SEN Support Services - Travel Training		FT40000	61,000
Curriculum Language Access Service		FT59000	693,900
Connexions - Bury		GC17000	315,000
Youth Disability Service		EG34000	15,000
Youth Service General		GY50000	234,000
School Crossing Patrol		HAS0000	395,000
Oasis Team (Early Help)		TTG0161	495,100
C.A.M.H.S.		TTG2470	232,700
Victoria Family Centre		TTG6100	506,900
1.2.8 Total Support for Inclusion			3,544,600

In respect to DSG recovery all of the services identified are subject to review by the Local Authority. Reports to Cabinet are already drafted for various services and these reports will be updated to acknowledge Schools' Forum support and considerations.

Reviewing these in the order of the table above, Schools' Forum should note:

Section 1.2.5: SEND Support Services

- Central Recharges are subject to Corporate Finance review
- Additional Needs Team is subject to current service review and re-organisation – options are being considered and will be consulted on in due course
- Sensory Support service is subject to current service review and re-organisation – options are being considered and will be consulted on in due course

Section 1.2.7: Inclusion

- This is where significant recent investment has been made into the priority inclusion provision and support. A detailed review will consider the impact this investment is actually making and whether consequential savings on enhanced inclusive practices and provision can be demonstrated and realised in the DSG recovery profile.

Section 1.2.8: Support for Inclusion

The Local Authority has identified several areas of spend, historically charged to the DSG, which have been added to its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and will be removed from the DSG with effect from April 2021. These total almost £2.3m and are added to Local Authority cost pressures at a time when the MTFS is demonstrating severe and increasing financial shortfalls over the next 4 years, exacerbated due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The items being charged to the Local Authority General Fund budget from 2021/22 onwards are:

Current S251 Line	Service Description	to General Fund	£	Proposed S251 Line
1.2.8	Sen Team	Y	255,000	2.1.2
1.2.8	16-19 Team	Y	56,000	2.3.1
1.2.8	LAC Education	Y	200,000	3.1.8
1.2.8	Connexions - Bury	Y	315,000	3.5.1
1.2.8	Youth Service General	Y	234,000	3.5.1
1.2.8	Oasis Team (Early Help)	Y	495,100	3.4.6
1.2.8	C.A.M.H.S. (No Grant)	Y	232,700	3.5.2
1.2.8	Victoria Family Centre	Y	506,900	3.4.4
	Total cost to LA		2,294,700	

The above proposal is compliant to the statutory Section 251 (S251) Budget Tables requirements.

Schools' Forum is requested to note this action of the LA

Further items currently included in S251 line 1.2.8 that require Schools' Forum consideration are:

1. Curriculum Language Access Service (CLAS) £693,900

See draft Cabinet report included with Forum papers:

Subject to a detailed options appraisal and outlined in the draft report to Cabinet, also subject to staff consultation in due course. CLAS has already been considered by Forum in respect to the Primary school de-delegated factor (Item 9b), however the review of service outlined in the report looks removing the significant contribution from the High Needs Block of nearly £694,000 and the service re-configures and changes to reduce its costs, deliver a traded offer and income generate.

1. Schools' Forum is therefore requested to recommend the review of the High Needs Block contribution of £693,900 in line with the options being considered by the CLAS service.

2. Schools Crossing Patrol £395,000

See draft Cabinet report included with Forum papers:

Schools' Forum will recall this service was considered as a Traded Service to Schools and was subject to consultation during 2014, whereby agreement was reached to increase schools delegated budgets for this, plus Health & Safety buy-back, with effect from April 2015. All schools were allocated an additional Lump Sum of £5,000 plus £30 per-pupil for Primary and £20 per-pupil for Secondary to ensure sufficient budget was included in schools delegated budgets to cover the increased Traded Services offer. The cost of a School Crossing Patrol staff member at that time was around £3,500.

Schools budgets were finalised and published prior to the Traded Services buy back responses being returned by schools for 2015/16. Unfortunately insufficient buy back responses were received to support the School Crossing Patrol service and a decision to protect the service had to be taken. As the General Fund of the LA had already considered the costs being met by schools there was little or no option but to charge the service to the High Needs Block. The cost in 2015 was around £500,000 and this has been reduced to current cost of £395,000, in line with reduction of the number of crossing patrol staff required.

Schools' Forum are assured, and all schools will be aware, that Schools delegated budgets have never been amended to date in order to recover the increased funding that was provided to cover this as a traded service from 2015.

The present situation is that this is not a legitimate cost to the High Needs Block the cost of school crossing patrol staff should be met by individual schools and academies from their delegated budgets with effect from April 2021. Payroll codes will be amended accordingly, including split coding for any shared crossing patrols, invoices will be raised to Academies.

The Local Authority will retain its statutory duties in respect to School Crossing Patrol and highways and will continue to recruit and train staff as required.

2. Schools' Forum is therefore recommended to support the transfer of costs so that schools and academies pay for their School Crossing Patrols from their delegated budgets.

3. Financial Controls

The DSG Recovery Cabinet report outlines detailed strategic recovery actions in section 5. This includes ensuring all financial processes, controls and responsibilities are clearly understood.

These controls are already being applied internally and included in all decision making in respect to SEND and DSG spend.

3. Schools' Forum are requested to note the controls and to appreciate the role of all stakeholders who are responsible for ensuring the DSG recovery is achieved.