

SCHOOLS FORUM

2018/19 Moving budget from the School block budget to the High Needs Block at the permitted half a percent.

1 Purpose of the Report

This report is to seek the approval from the School Forum Members to the Council's proposal to move half a percent from the School Block budget to the High Needs Block budget.

2 Suggested Actions

The Forum is asked to approve the proposal.

3 Background

The Department for Education (DfE) has made a number of changes to the School block budget, one of these changes is to ring fence the School Block budget which includes the Growth Fund, this means that there is restriction on transferring funding from the School Block budget.

The DfE are allowing the council to transfer a maximum of half a percent to another block after consultation with all Schools including Academies and approval from the School Forum after that consultation, has been completed and reported.

The Local Authority went out to consultation with all Schools with the deadline to complete their preference by 6th October 2017.

4 Financial Summary

The half a percent equates to approx. £473k on the current minimum figures available.

5 Conclusion

The council has 17 responses from 65 schools. 11 school agreed with the council proposal and 6 disagreed with the council proposal.

Please see **appendix A** for some of the comments for and against the council's proposal.

Do the school forum agree with the Council's proposal to transfer a maximum of 0.5% from the school block to the high needs block?

Appendix A		
	Extracts from comments return from the consultation	Note
	11 out of 17 schools that repoded supported the council's proposed - Please see below some of the school comments	
1	We support this transfer for 18/19 only, on the understanding that the money is used: 1.To support the “spend to save” agenda 2: To support inclusive schools	
2	YES IF THE MONEY IS USED TO SECURE SPECIALIST PLACES WITHIN THE BOROUGH TO REDUCE THE MONEY SPENT HAVING TO SEND WOKINGHAM CHILDREN ELSEWHERE.	
3	Yes- if the extra funding is to support the expansion of local provision and not for out of borough independent special schools. No- for general expenditure across independent special schools	
4	Yes-Ethically we feel high needs block does need extra funding and those pupils with high needs deserve all the assistance they really need. No- Would the schools benefit directly from the transfer? Would the transfer just help reduce the high needs dificit? Leave the money with the schools for the schools to decide where to spend the additional funds	As both
5	The decision has been based on the significant increase in requests and pressure on the HNB budget since the extension of the age range to include 0 to 5 and 18 to 25	
6	Given that extra funding will be made available it seems fair to provide extra support to the High Needs Block which is struggling to cope.	
7	We are of course prioritising and re-prioritising on almost a daily basis in schools and it makes sense that we should instigate a higher provision for an area of education that needs additional funds and take away an element of that uncertainty.	
	6 out of 17 schools that repoded did not supported the council's proposed - Please see below some of the school comments	
1	We do not agree with the proposal, which will effectively reduce our school budget further. We think this proposal should have been discussed first at the schools forum and then only after there has been clarity over funding made available to schools. We suggest that the LA should be looking at alternative ways of funding higher needs provision and not by top slicing the school budget further.	

2	From Governor comment: AT THIS TIME WHEN THE SCHOOL IS ALREADY STRETCHED BY THE IMPACT OF A FALLING ROLL PREDICATED BY THE OPENING OF BOHUNT IN 2016(WITH NO FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY WBC TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT ON BUDGETS / STAFFING) ANY FURTHER REDUCTION IN FUNDING TO THE SCHOOL IS NOT ACCEPTABLE AT THIS TIME.	
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Coral Miller
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October 2017

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Head of Finance
October 2017

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