

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: [Schools Forum](#)

Subject: **High Needs Block Overview**

Report of: **Directorate Finance Lead – Children’s and Schools**

Summary

The high needs block (HNB) is expected to support recovery of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) overspend of £2.26m by the end of 2022/23. Currently this has been met through additional grant income provided by the three-year schools funding settlement. Moving forward though more tangible savings are required through review of education provision and ensuring all funding is targeted to ensure best value for money.

This report and supporting presentation summarise the:

- The current HNB budget of c. £100m and how growth in funding has been allocated over time.
- The challenges to be faced moving forward by the Council and how these challenges will be managed.

Recommendations

All Schools Forum members are asked to note and comment on:

- High needs block position 2021/22
- Analysis on current budget challenges and prevention strategies being put in place

The attached presentation: HNB Webinar Review was presented to special school head teachers in May 2021, which provides an overview of the HNB in entirety and supports a better understanding of high needs funding system and challenges.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Supporting Reports:

16 November 2020	DSG Position
16 November 2020	High Needs Block Recovery
18 January 2021	Dedicated Schools Grant 2021-22

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report and the supporting presentation (HNB Webinar Review) is to explain the current position of the HNB, which accounts for c.£100m of Manchester's Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2021/22. The supporting presentation provides further context on the following areas:
- A full breakdown on how the HNB block budget for financial year 2021/22 has been broken into categories of spend. This also provide an insight into the full HNB remit.
 - Strategic pressures and challenges that the Council will face moving forward. Potential strategies on how these financial pressures can be alleviated.
 - How special school funding has changed over the last four financial years and comparing against growth in pupil numbers to understand the per pupil increase in funding provided.
 - A comparison on how differently all North West Councils fund their special schools.
 - A summary of expensive independent placement for both the pre-16 and post-16 pupil cohorts. To outline the significance of reducing these placements where possible to support more targeted funding elsewhere in the high needs system.
 - Review of Department of Education 2019/20 benchmarking information for pupil and funding data which has been analysed against other Core Cities such as Leeds and Liverpool.
 - The pressures that tribunal decisions put on Education teams and the budget. The importance across the City to be able to win these cases where possible.
 - Steps agreed to move forward to support better collaborative working between the Council and education providers.
- 1.2 This presentation was collated to support discussion with Manchester's special school head teachers to provide them a wider picture of high needs pressures across the City. Leading towards discussion of multi-agency strategy development allowing for a consistent approach moving forward to support our children's and young people of the City and achievement Our Manchester priorities.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 All Schools Forum members are asked to note and comment on:
- High needs block position 2021/22
 - Analysis on current budget challenges and prevention strategies being put in place
- 2.2 The attached presentation: HNB Webinar Review was presented to special school head teachers in May 2021, which provides an overview of the HNB in entirety and supports a better understanding of high needs funding system and challenges.

