

**SLOUGH SCHOOLS' FORUM**  
**14<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**Directorate of Children, Learning and Skills**

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**High Needs/SEND Review Update 2020/21**

**1) PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- a) To provide Forum with an update on the following activities:
  - i) HNB Centrally Retained Budget 2020-21
  - ii) DSG Recovery Plan
  - iii) Resource Base Review

**2) RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Forum notes the work underway and the reporting timetable.

**3) HNB Centrally retained Budget 2020-21**

- a) A review of the centrally retained budget was carried out following the reporting of the 2019-20 outturn to the January Forum. The changes proposed are limited in scope and will be revisited as part of the DSG Recovery Plan.
- b) The main changes include:
  - i) Dedicated finance support for the SEND team – recruitment underway
  - ii) Increased SALT funding
  - iii) Increase funding for LAC support
  - iv) Budget for early intervention initiatives linked to reducing requests for assessments.

	HNB Centrally Retained Budgets 2019-20	19-20	Revised budget 20-21	Difference	Reason for changes
F460	SEND Financial Support	55,000	105,000	50,000	£50k for new SEND Finance Officer. The SEND Service has no dedicated finance support. This is causing major delays in ordering, invoicing and accruals.
F461	SEN - Assessment Capacity	182,000	217,000	35,000	35k to SEND staffing from DSG
F191	Early Years Inclusion	70,000	70,000	0	
F166	Hard to Place Pupils	267,000	170,000	-97,000	Reduction in line with new FAP Protocol
F233	Exclusions and Access to Education	31,700	31,700	0	
F235	Home Education	42,600	42,600	0	No change position agreed before Covid. Pressures on service expected in autumn term 2020
F413	0-5 SEN Transport	46,300	46,300	0	
F430	Vulnerable Children Management Incl.	30,000	30,000	0	
F410	Autism Outreach Team	185,700	135,000	-50,700	Reduced based on actual spend over last 2 years. Autism support will be reviewed as part of the Recovery Plan project.
F691	EY SEN advisory Teachers/support Workers EY settings	118,100	118,100	0	
F692	EY SEN advisory Teachers/support Workers in Children's Centres	63,000	63,000	0	
F465	SENCO Network	100,000	65,000	-35,000	Reduced based on the actuals from last 2 years/ no change in the service
F463	SEND Teacher Advisor	118,200	60,000	-58,200	Reduced based on the actuals from last 2 years/ no change in the service
F416	Sensory Impairment	470,000	470,000	0	
F417	SALT	251,800	300,000	48,200	Demand increased
F446	Education Resource Services (Formerly LACES)	106,700	206,700	100,000	Demand increased
F406	Primary Provision Behaviour	164,300	164,300	0	
	Post 16 Advisor	0	40,000	40,000	Agreed post for 12 months with young people service team
	Early Intervention Projects	0	67,700	67,700	Early Intervention plans for 20.21
		<b>2,302,400</b>	<b>2,402,400</b>	<b>100,000</b>	

#### 4) DSG Recovery Plan

##### a) Key dates

- i) Recovery Plan submitted – June 2019
- ii) Response letter from DfE – October 2019
- iii) Schools Forum 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 – initial brief
- iv) Meeting with DfE/SEND Advisor/ESFA – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

##### b) Feedback from meeting

- i) Whilst the DfE response letter to the Recovery Plan was critical the meeting was very open and positive.
- ii) The Council acknowledged the weaknesses in the original plan and proposed a different, more robust approach. These are summarised in a briefing paper shared with the DfE, Appendix A:

The Council's approach was well received and approved by both DfE SEND Advisors and ESFA.

- iii) Increased HN Funding – for 2020-21 SBC's HNB increased by £2m. The Council made the point that whilst the increased funding was welcome, if it was simply absorbed into the income, it would make little difference to the overall funding prognosis. It therefore suggested that some of additional funding should be used to invest in save projects (eg those linked to early intervention) which would in turn allow improved practices and efficiencies to be introduced early and improve the sustainability and effectiveness of the Recovery Plan. This was agreed by the DfE.
- iv) There was an acknowledgment of certain key factors impacting SBC's HNB situation:
- Population mobility, immigration;
  - Costs of specialist places are comparable with national and regional comparators and are not excessive – so options for savings are limited
  - The growth in EHCPs and all the more importantly the increase in the percentage of requests for assessment approved (reflected across England)
  - The growth in demand for EHCPs in early years and primary phases (national issue)
- v) The DfE acknowledged that for some LAs it might be impossible for HNB deficits to be completely cleared. However, it would be necessary for LAs to demonstrate, perhaps over a period of 5-7 years, that they had a robust and sustainable recovery plan for DSG/HNB which focused on efficiencies and most importantly meeting the needs of the area. It was likely that should such a recovery plan be implemented that deficits arising at the end of the recovery period would be written off.

c) Progress and next steps

- i) Due to the need to divert resources to managing the Covid pandemic it has not been possible to progress the Recovery Plan. However, additional interim resource dedicated to the Recovery Plan has been procured with effect from 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020 with assignment expected to run until December.
- ii) The first report will be submitted to Schools Forum in October with a draft plan to follow in December.

## 5) Resource Base Review

- a) As with the Recovery Plan the work to complete the review has been delayed due to Covid 19 commitments but with the additional resource referred to above the work will run in tandem with the Recovery Plan.
- b) Key dates:
- i) Complete analysis, modelling – July-August 2020

- ii) Consultation with schools – September 2020
- iii) Schools Forum – October 2020
- iv) ESFA places return – November 2020

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## APPENDIX A – BRIEFING PAPER FOR DfE – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

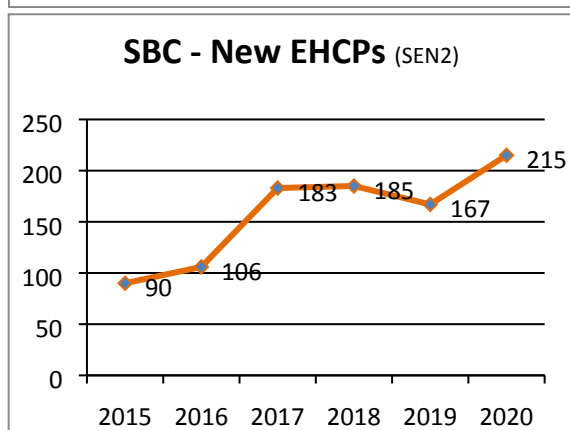
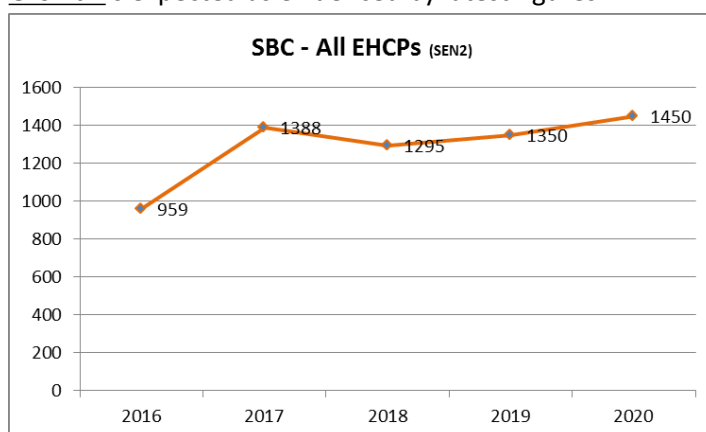
### DSG RECOVERY PLAN – MEETING WITH DfE - 22<sup>ND</sup> January 2020

#### 1. Summary

- EHCP forecasts – nil increase in future was never realistic and even had it been it had not been tested (see section 2 below)
- Opportunities and Pressures – in the main remain valid but arguments need to be developed further, be supported with robust data/projections and to have been consulted upon and owned by partners (see ‘3’ below)
- Savings (S1-S5) not justified – need to start afresh (see ‘4’ below)

#### 2. EHCP Projections

- Growth is expected as evidenced by latest figures:



- Approval of requests for assessment

New EHCPs	2019	2020
Total requests	265	257
Total approved	167	215
% approved	63%	84%

	2019	2020
Under age 5	76	76
Aged 5 to 10	60	88
Aged 11 to 15	26	44
Aged 16 to 19	4	5
Aged 20 to 25	1	2
	<b>167</b>	<b>215</b>

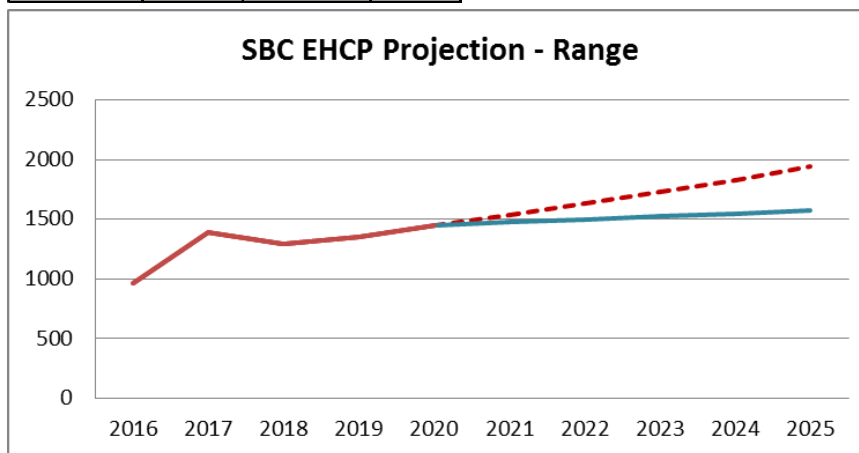
- i. Trends – increased number of approved assessments and higher proportions of EY and primary phases in particular
  - ii. The last 18 months has seen a strengthening of the SEND service and greater robustness in the SEND Panel decision making which has been supported by a new banding system;
  - iii. Confidence that decisions to approve are sound based on the evidence submitted, but....
  - iv. Many of the cases being submitted could have been avoided with much earlier identification of need, intervention and more therapeutic support:
    - Most new cases involve SEMH, anxiety and communication related needs;
    - The Local Area has acknowledged need for more SALT provision;
    - Schools are not identifying and dealing with behavioural issues early enough/are not inclusive enough – this is also is being addressed
    - Conclusion – that the number of new EHCPs can be managed downwards
- c. Existing EHCPs
- i. Further analysis will be carried out to identify ‘high risk’ groups of EHCPs ie those with top ups, levels of complexity, long term prognosis of need for complex support etc
  - ii. Identification of EHCPs due for cessation
  - iii. More scrutiny of transitions into employment
- d. Rationale for Projections
- Modelling needs to take into account the following:
- i. EHCP yield from natural population growth and
  - ii. from new housing
  - iii. EHCP demand from reforms – have we properly quantified it - should now be mainly post 19, with some EY
  - iv. What is an acceptable level of EHCPs for SBC – ie if national average is 2.9% and SBC is higher, does 2.9% become our ‘maximum allowable’ (or avge of stat neighbours)?
  - v. By how much as the number of EHCPs been inflated due to over approval, lack of timely cessation etc
  - vi. More forensic analysis eg. of trends in age groups:

Total EHCPs	2016	% against total	2017	% against total	2018	% against total	2019	% against total	Average
Under age 5	12	1%	97	7%	89	7%	97	7%	6%
Aged 5 to 10	356	37%	550	40%	505	39%	521	39%	39%
Aged 11 to 15	352	37%	454	33%	386	30%	430	32%	33%
Aged 16 to 19	239	25%	273	20%	265	20%	242	18%	21%
Aged 20 to 25	0	0%	14	1%	50	4%	60	4%	2%
	959	100%	1388	100%	1295	100%	1350	100%	

vii. Initial projection

- I. Worst case - based on annual increases in total EHCPs over last 3 years, 6% pa
- II. Least increase – based on average increase (actual & predicted) in school population, 2016-17 to 2023-24. 1.6%

All EHCPs	Least	Worst	Diff
2016	959	959	
2017	1388	1388	
2018	1295	1295	
2019	1350	1350	
2020	1450	1450	
2021	1473	1537	64
2022	1497	1629	132
2023	1521	1727	206
2024	1545	1831	286
2025	1570	1940	371



- III. Much more work will be carried out over next few months to refine the projections.

**3. Pressures & Opportunities:**

Further development is needed of those included in plan, other examples include:

- a. Overpayments to school settings, both in SEND and non SEND (eg AP) settings
- b. Misalignment of provision to need

- c. Until 18 months ago lack of robust management and policing of statutory processes
- d. Imperfect introduction of banding system has led to increased costs but was also not supported by the simultaneous implementation of the review of resource bases.

#### **4. Savings opportunities**

- a. Potential savings/efficiencies eg:
  - i. Retaining more children in mainstream schools through earlier intervention (eg early help mental health team) plus
  - ii. Reassignment of funding to early intervention
  - iii. Reconfiguring RBs and resetting funding model
  - iv. Renegotiation of special school rates
  - v. Review and renegotiation of independent/OOB placements (big savings should not be assumed as a matter of course – VFM should be a factor)
  - vi. Streamlining of therapies provision especially SALT eg ‘double payments’
  - vii. Ensuring Care and Health partners are paying their fair share of complex/high cost placements;
  - viii. Removal/reduction in unjustified demands on HNB especially exclusions, off rolling, CME;
- b. The level of savings will be predicated on:
  - i. A thorough understanding of our needs
  - ii. knowing whether or not we are paying the market rate both to SBC and other providers
  - iii. more efficient commissioning
  - iv. consistent practice across all services and schools – teaching, commercial approach, holistic
  - v. Introduction of robust controls

#### **5. Working with schools and partners**

- a. The plan and the need to improve it have been shared with all partners via Schools Forum, Inclusion and SEND Partnership Board
- b. A task and finish group has been agreed with Schools Forum to develop the Recovery Plan over the next few months with the intention of feeding into the 21-22 planning round;

The work will be integrated with the SEND Strategy Action Plan.