

Meeting/Date	Schools Forum 12 January 2023	Agenda Item No.	11
Report Title	2023-24 Proposed Use of DSG Reserve		
Decision/ Discussion/ Update	Decision		
Author	Neil Marlow Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning BELS		
Appendices	None		
Summary	This report provides proposals for the intended use of DSG Reserves in 2023-24		
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to the proposed use of £750,000 of DSG reserves to fund new arrival Asylum Seekers as set out in the report. 2. Agree the proposed use of £1m of DSG reserves to fund therapies for children with EHCP as set out in the report. 		

1.1 The forecast carry-forward of Dedicated Schools Grant funding to 2023/24 is £3.5m. Carried forward DSG reserves have generally been used to support pressures in the DSG High Needs budget and the growth in Education, Health and Care Plans means it would be prudent to retain most of this carry forward to support the High Needs budget in 2023-24. In 2022/23 a decision was made to allocate £1,575,000 of the carried forward underspend on

One -off lump sums for Maintained Nursery Schools	£400,000
One-off supplement to the hourly rate for 3- and 4-year-olds	£175,000
<u>New arrivals (Hong Kong and asylum seeker hotels) up to:</u>	<u>£1,000,000</u>
<u>Sub-total</u>	<u>£1,575,000</u>

1.2 Of the £1m earmarked for spending for new arrivals (Hong Kong and asylum seeker hotels) only £0.213m was spent in 2022/23.

1.3 As this was not all spent and the reserve is still healthy, it is proposed to allocate up to £750,000 for new arrivals from asylum seeker hotels. The existing hotels that we had last year are still in operation and there is an additional asylum seeker hotel in Finchley.

New arrivals - children of asylum seeker families living in designated hotels

- 1.4 The continuing influx of asylum seekers to the United Kingdom, many of them from Afghanistan, has meant that the three hotels that were designated by the government for temporary housing for newly arrived asylum seeker families has been added to, with a further hotel in Finchley. Children of school-age living in these hotels are entitled to be admitted to local schools even if on a temporary basis.
- 1.5 This creates financial challenges for many schools, as they incur extra costs to support the welfare and regular attendance of the children from these families. Schools may incur extra staffing costs, whether for extra teachers (or fractions of teachers), teaching assistants and other support staff or for specialist mentors to support individual children. Some incur extra costs for extra school clubs and for providing English as an Additional Language support. For children from poorer families, many schools have also had to incur non-staff costs, for example on providing free school meals, until eligibility is established and on purchasing school uniforms, sportswear and equipment (such as laptops).
- 1.6 It is proposed to allocate one-off funding from carried forward underspend in the Dedicated Schools Grant to support schools that enrol children after the October 2022 census date for the period these children are in schools up until the end of the summer term 2023. It is proposed to include funding for all schools with children living in the designated hotels.

Approach to funding of new arrivals

- 1.7 The technical mechanism for providing the funding for new arrivals, as it will sit outside the school funding formula, is again to allocate the money toward 'ongoing local authority statutory responsibilities for all schools in respect of the welfare and attendance of pupils'. The allocation requires the agreement of the Schools Forum and the proposals for spending the money also requires the agreement of the Schools Forum.
- 1.8 The Schools Forum is asked to approve the allocation of this funding. The Forum is also asked to approve the following proposed approach to the funding
- The funding will be capped at £0.75m and will be one-off for the financial year 23-24 only.
 - The payments should be based on an agreed proportion of the 2023/24 AWPU funding for schools for each eligible pupil, with the proportion being adjusted to ensure the total allocation is within the agreed £0.75m budget.
 - Funding is for all children of asylum seeker families living in the designated hotels who enrol in Barnet maintained primary and secondary schools and primary and secondary Academies after the October 2022 school census date with payments being calculated pro-rata for the weeks they attend up to the end of July 2023.
 - The mechanism for payment to the schools will be the same as that deployed in 2022/23 for this purpose
 - The proposals, if agreed by the Schools Forum, will be recommended for approval by the authorisation of the Executive Director, Children's Services, who will then approve the amounts to be paid to eligible schools.

Therapies for Children with ECHP

1.9 As can be seen by Table 1 below, the number of children and young people the Council supports through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased significantly since the introduction of the Children and Family Act (2014). This is not surprising given the threshold for a Statutory Education, Health and Care, Needs Assessment (EHCNA) was lowered and at the same time the age range of those eligible was increased to 0-25 years.

1.10 Since 2015, the 0-15 cohort in Barnet has increased by 51.85%, the total increase in the number of EHCPs maintained by Barnet since 2015 has increased by 85.49

Table 1. Growth in EHCPs since 2015.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
England	240,183	256,315	287,290	319,819	353,995	390,109	430,697	473,255
London	41,104	43,708	48,554	53,975	59,672	65,853	72,193	78,203
Barnet	1,731	1,817	2,088	2,256	2,372	2,682	2,899	3,211

1.11 Barnet was subject to a joint CQC/Ofsted local area SEND Inspection between the 17 - 21 January 2022. The inspection outcome feedback letter can be found [here](#).

1.12 The feedback letter was extremely favourable in many areas *“Children and young people with SEND enjoy their time in education The support they receive helps them to access learning at school and college more easily...Parents and carers are typically positive about their children’s experiences in schools and colleges”*.

1.13 A key area for improvement was in the delivery of therapies.

“Gaps in therapy provision narrow the support available to meet the needs of children and young people. Some providers find it a challenge to meet the needs of those with speech and language difficulties due to the limited availability of speech and language therapists, for example.

Waiting times for occupational therapy and physiotherapy have been too long. Some children and young people have not been able to access the support they have needed”.

SEND Area Inspection Outcome Letter March 2022

1.14 The Council has already put in place the Language Enrichment Programme (LEP) and support to schools in terms of Occupational Therapy via the OTTO club. These were initially funded by the Covid recovery funds which have now been fully depleted. These programmes need to be reviewed to consider the best use of funding to optimise impact for Children and young people with SEND including either continuation, adaption or change.

1.15 There is a need for direct therapy to be commissioned for children and young people who have been identified as requiring direct intervention as well as wider staff training to increase the skill level of all schools in meeting the wider therapeutic needs of children with SEND.

- Direct therapy would be for those children who have already been identified as requiring direct intervention.
- Training could include part funded training sessions to schools for Trauma Informed Practice and Emotional Literacy or emotionally based school refusal as well as support to improve whole school approaches to speech and language for example.

1.16 Item 7, Table 3 (p.14) of the Schools Forum papers show a carry forward in the DSG reserves of £3.51m and it is proposed to utilise £1m of this to support the therapy and training offer across the local area as above.

Recommendations:

We are asking that Schools Forum

1. Agree the proposed use of DSG reserves as set out above, to the funding new arrivals as set out above - £750,000
2. Agree the proposed use of DSG reserves for the funding of therapies for children with EHCP - £1m