

(Urgent) Decision Record – High Needs Block

Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking the decision	Councillor Izzi Seccombe Leader of the Council
Date of Decision	21 January 2020

Decision Taken

That the Leader of the Council approves the submission of the 'disapplication' application to the Secretary of State for Education to move 0.5% of Dedicated Schools Grant from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

Reasons for Decisions

This urgent decision is required to formalise a decision to continue with a disapplication application concerning the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Background Information

At Cabinet on 16th December it was agreed, 'as a precautionary measure that the Council continues at this stage with the disapplication application to move 0.5% of Dedicated Schools Grant from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block until the Leader in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Education makes a final, decision whether to continue or withdraw the disapplication application should anticipated changes in financial regulations still make this relevant.'

There remains an expected overspend of £6.398m in the High Needs Block in 2020/21. Following consultation, Schools Forum considered the proposal to move 0.5% (£1.748m) of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block on 16th January 2020. This could be achieved without affecting indicative school budgets under the national funding formula. The proposal was rejected at the Schools Forum meeting on 16th January 2020.

The local authority can request that Secretary of State for Education intervenes on this matter by submitting a 'disapplication.' The submission of the disapplication was made on 28th November 2019, as required by the Department for Education.

This decision made in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning formalises the earlier decision to continue with the submission and not to withdraw it.

Financial Implications

Due to a higher than expected final settlement in the Schools Block, 0.5% of the Schools Block budget can be moved to the High Needs Block without affecting any indicative allocations to schools. By rejecting the proposal, Schools Forum will seek to distribute funding to individual schools in-year following further consultation.

It will be necessary for Schools Forum to tackle the issue of High Needs Block overspend as representatives of the school system as a whole. The level of forecast overspend makes it likely that a Dedicated Schools Grant Recovery Plan will need to be submitted and agreed with the Department for Education.

Guidance is still awaited on whether local authorities will be permitted to use core resources for reducing High Needs Block overspend.

Report Author	Ross Caws
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Portfolio Holder	Councillor Izzi Seccombe

Checklist

Urgent matter?	Yes
Confidential or Exempt? (State the category of exempt information)	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of Reports considered

Link to published proposed decision report:

<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=203&MId=3015&Ver=4>

List of Background Papers

None

Members and officers consulted or informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Izzi Seccombe
 Corporate Board – (Cabinet Paper 16 Dec 2019)
 Legal – Jane Pollard
 Finance – Virginia Rennie
 Democratic Services – Paul Williams

Councillors Hayfield and Seccombe.

Councillors Roodhouse, Chilvers and Chattaway notified of urgent decision