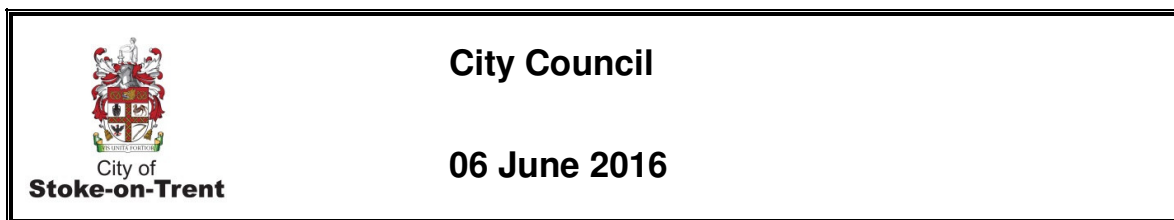


Open Report



Update Report on High Needs DSG Bids

Report of	Director of Children, Adult and Family Services
Contact officer(s)	Helen Meigh – Team Manager CAF Dave Perrett – Assistant Director for Learning Services
Type of Decision	For Information
Cabinet Member	Councillor Janine Bridges - Cabinet Member for Education and Economy
Wards Affected	All Wards

What is the report about? How will it fit with the Council's priorities?

1.1	The purpose of the report is to update Schools' Forum on the creation of an innovation funding pot from the High Needs Block Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG).
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What are we recommending?

2.1	Members of the Forum are asked to consider the report and: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the total amount of funding provisionally allocated through the setting up of an innovation fund from the High Needs DSG. This fund will allow schools and academies to bid for project funding to support outcomes related to High Needs pupils.• note the evaluation for the progress of the project required to access the remaining funding.
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How much will it cost and how will it be paid for?

3.1	The innovation fund is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant that is ring fenced for use on settings within the City.
3.2	The total funding allocation is £1.234m to be paid to settings in six monthly instalments depending on the successful evaluation of the project at this point.

When are we doing it?	
4.1	Ofsted inspected the LA's school improvement function in Jan 2015. Their report states that the LA need to "focus on raising attainment and reducing inequalities and achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others" and that "the most able pupils and those with disabilities or who have special educational needs in mainstream schools are not making enough progress."
4.2	To address this weakness, bids were welcomed from settings in the Autumn of 2015 for projects to improve the educational attainment and future outcomes for vulnerable pupils in the City.
4.3	Initial allocations were paid to successful settings early in 2016.

Everything else you need to know:	
5.1	On 18 th May 2015 Schools Forum approved a paper utilising £1.5m of unallocated funding on projects that will beneficially impact the outcomes for high needs pupils via a bid mechanism. Applications were sought from all schools and academies.
5.2	The project leads were required to submit an application form to the group stating the aims and deliverables of the project, timescales and funding required. The application needed to clearly state how the project fitted in with the City Council and schools priorities.
5.3	The priorities were set as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To better meet the needs of pupils with high needs and vulnerability • To improve the attainment of pupils with high needs • To allow more students with high needs to be supported within the City • To maximise the potential of all SEN pupils to achieve as much independence as possible and enjoy a quality of life which is both stimulating and rewarding • To increase the provision for groups of high needs and vulnerable pupils • To prepare for adulthood and accessing education, employment and training.
5.4	The project lead was required to supply evaluation criteria that will be used to assess the project as it is on-going to access further stage payments. It is the valuation process that is now the subject of this report.
5.5	The successful applicants were given an initial 6 month payment. Subject to a successful evaluation of the project the remaining funding will be made available in 6 monthly instalments. All of the projects will be evaluated at the end of the project and will consider the success and impact on pupil achievement.
5.6	The initial allocations were made early in 2016 and therefore the first round of evaluation is due in June 2016. Table 1 shows the successful applications and the total funding provisionally allocated to each project.

Table 1: High Needs DSG Successful Applications

School	Total Allocation £	Allocation paid 2015/2016 £
Star Academy	47,000	23,500
Portland Special School	40,000	20,000
Abbey Hill Special School	100,450	50,225
Kemball Special School	142,235	71,118
Ball Green Primary	150,000	75,000
Kemball Special School	200,000	0
Thistley Hough Academy	296,500	74,125
Crescent Academy	67,500	33,750
Summerbank Academy	16,200	8,100
Encore	104,000	52,000
CLT	70,000	0
Total	1,233,885	407,818

5.7	<p>The process of evaluation is set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send evaluation form to lead contact at school for completion by a set date • Arrange a visit by assessor to review the project • Review of returned evaluation form before visit by assessor, finance and High Needs Working Group • Assessor visit to project • Completion of evaluation form within 1 week of visit • High Needs Working Group review evaluation form • Feedback to school within 1 month of visit • Report to Schools' Forum
5.8	The evaluation form for completion by the school is attached in Appendix A.
5.9	Schools' forum is requested to note the report and a further update will be provided to Schools' forum following the first round of the evaluation process.

Technical Appendix:

The following sources of information were used for this report:
DfE: School & Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2014-15 DfE: Section 251 Guidance 2015-16 DfE: School Funding Reform: Next steps towards a fairer system LA: Previous Schools Forum Reports & Minutes relating to School Funding Reform & School Budgets
The following appendices are included as part of this report:
Appendix A High Needs DSG Bid Evaluation Form

Implications taken into consideration in this report:

Financial:
The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is payable to local authorities under section 14 of the Education Act 2002 by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). The formal terms of grant are given by the Secretary of State under section 16 of the Education Act 2002. The DSG is paid as a ring-fenced specific grant and must be used in support of the schools budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2014.
Legal:
As set out by the School & Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2014, there is a legal requirement to set a balanced Schools' Budget in consultation with the Schools Forum.
Public Health, Human Resources and Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012:
No direct implications from decisions relating to the report. Future funding allocations could impact on staffing within individual schools and services.
Equality Impact or Environmental Impact Assessments:
In making arrangements for funding young people with high needs, the local authority must treat those placed in maintained provision, in academies and free schools, in the further education sector, and in non-maintained and independent provision on a fair and equivalent basis
Existing Council Policies:
Children and Families Plan.
Key Risks:
The funding allocated through the innovation fund needs to make a difference in raising attainment and reducing inequalities and achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others. The risk is that funding is paid to projects that are not effective in this aim if the valuation process is not robust.

Technical Appendix Part 2 - Executive Decisions*:

Options Considered:	
1.	The High Needs DSG must be used to target the current issues relating to high needs pupils and should make a considerable improvement to the educational outcomes and preparation for adulthood of these pupils.
2.	Projects to be funded are anticipated to target where additional provision is required, support for cohorts with specific needs and an improved outreach service for high needs pupils across the City.

Reason for Decision:

* In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Appendix A

High Needs Block DSG Bid Evaluation - 6 months



School	
Contact	
Amount of bid	
Funding received	

Key Points of Bid

This will be completed from the bid prior to sending out the evaluation form.

Evaluation

Academic outcomes

Compared to the outcomes quoted in the bid, how has the project performed in the first 6 months.

Sustainability

From what the project team have seen can this still be sustained after the cessation of the DSG funding. If so how.

Scaleability

Has the project had a beneficial effect for the pupils across the City? If not yet, how is this to be achieved.

Value for money

Economy (spending less)

Are all resources purchased at reasonable quality but lowest cost?

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Are staff working cost efficiently and not over resources or over skilled?

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Efficiency (spending well)

Demonstrate how you are showing efficiencies in the project.

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Effectiveness (spending wisely)

Demonstrate how you are spending the funding effectively

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Use this section to demonstrate how the project is displaying value for money in addition to the above and what, if anything, can be done to improve this.

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Financial Information

This section is to show the funding allocation, actual expenditure to date and estimated fundig required for the duration of the DSG funded project. If this varies from the initial funding, please state why this has changed.

Item	Funding received	Spend to date	Remaining Expenditure required

Opinion of progress and overall project outcomes

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Evaluation form completed by

--

Date

--

Assessors Report

--

Financial Opinion

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Overall opinion on continuation of funding

--

Assessor

--

Date

--

Finance Representative

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Date

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Chair of High Needs Working Group

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Date

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