

West Berkshire Schools' Forum

Title of Report:	Funding of Therapy Services
Date of Meeting:	14th July 2014
Contact Officer(s)	Jane Seymour

For Decision

1. Background

- 1.1 Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy services for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs are purchased from the Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust and are currently funded through the Education Service Budget.
- 1.2 In most Local Authorities these costs are met from DSG as they clearly meet the criteria for DSG funding and should be funded through this route. The Education Service budget has therefore effectively been subsidising the DSG.
- 1.3 In the context of significant savings which have to be made in the Council's budget in 2015-16 and beyond, it is unlikely that it will be possible to sustain this funding and these essential services could therefore be under threat.

2. Proposed changes

- 2.1 It is proposed that, in line with the practice in other Local Authorities, the costs of these therapy services are met through DSG so that they can be protected.
- 2.2 There is no possibility of Health picking up these costs. Health fund therapy assessments and also ongoing therapy for children who do not have Statements. However, the Health Service has no statutory duty to fund therapy services for children with Statements. This is deemed to be educational provision as it is necessary for children to be able to access the curriculum. This principle has been clearly established through case law.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that a more detailed report is brought to the Heads' Funding Group and Schools' Forum in the autumn term, including cost details.