

## SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action



For Information



### **Brief Description of Item** (including the purpose / reason for presenting this for consideration by the Forum)

This report asks Members to agree the publication of the proposed consultation document on the High Needs Block funding model for 2017/18. This includes first sight of the estimated minimum number of places the Authority expects to commission and the arrangements for paying top up (Plus Element) funding.

### **Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum**

The Forum considered the consultation on the 2016/17 high needs funding model on 21 October 2015 and set the High Needs Block budget in January 2016. High needs funding is regularly discussed by Members.

### **Background / Context**

Please see Appendix 1 (the proposed consultation document itself) for the background to the proposals for the 2017/18 funding model.

This report, and the consultation appendix, focuses on High Needs Block technical and formula structure matters; how delegated budgets for individual providers are calculated and allocated in the 2017/18 financial.

Members are reminded that the DfE has announced that 2017/18 is a 'stand-still' year and no major technical changes are being made to the funding framework in so far as this affects high needs providers. The Minimum Funding Guarantee, including for special school funding, is set again at minus 1.5%.

Members are also reminded that size and continuing growth of the cost pressure within the High Needs Block is one of key issues the Forum must manage. The High Needs Block continues to be under significant financial pressure; overspending in 2016/17 in total by £5.6m (10%) against the notional DSG budget allocated by the DfE. This is largely the result of demographic stresses, which will continue for a number of years. This overspending is met currently through contributions from the Schools and Early Years Blocks within the DSG. The Schools Forum received a presentation on 18 May 2016, which explained that a further 360 specialist places are needed by September 2018 (at roughly 120 per year in each of the next 3 years) simply to meet forecasted demographic growth. The annual cost of 120 places (at an average of £21,000 per place) is roughly £2.52m. At its meeting on 21 September, the Forum agreed to the funding of the first 120 places from January 2017. The Schools Forum has also been made aware of a significant growth in cost of out of authority, independent and non maintained school placements and in other aspects of high needs provision, including medical-need home tuition. Planning on this basis, indicatively, increases the cost of high needs provision by £5.43m in 2017/18 i.e. the overspending in 2017/18 increases from £5.6m to £11.03m.

### **Details of the Item for Consideration**

Please see Appendix 1, which is the draft of the consultation paper on proposals for the funding of High Needs provision in 2017/18. This document also includes information on how the funding system works and other issues, including cost pressures and a comparison of our top up funding against other authorities. The document proposes continuity in 2017/18.

An indicative view of the minimum number of places estimated to be funded in Bradford-located settings is given in paragraph 5.

The proposals for change for 2017/18 are discussed in paragraph 6. Members are asked to consider the document and agree for this to be published. The outcomes of the consultation will be presented to the Forum in December and Members will be asked to make final recommendations on the funding model at this point.

### **Implications for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)** (if any)

Yes – as referred to in Appendix 1.

**How does this item support the achievement of the District's Education Priorities**

Ensuring appropriate resources are available, in the right places, to support the most vulnerable children across the District, must be a key focus for the Forum, building on current good practices. It is also vitally important that, alongside managing increasing cost pressures, that sufficient resources are available to the Local Authority and to schools to meet statutory responsibilities around SEND and meeting pupil need.

**Recommendations**

**The Forum is asked to agree to the publication of the proposed consultation on the High Needs Block funding model for 2017/18.**

**List of Supporting Appendices / Papers** (where applicable)

Appendix 1 - Consultation on Funding High Needs Provision 2017/18

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