

SCHOOLS FORUM AGENDA ITEM

For Action

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For Information

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

This report asks Forum Members to consider the outcomes of the consultation on the 2018/19 High Needs Funding Model and the planned number of high needs places to be commissioned by the Authority. The report also gives an update on the position of other strategic high needs funding matters. This update is provided in advance of asking Members to make final recommendations on 10 January 2018.

Date (s) of any Previous Discussion at the Forum

The 2018/19 consultation document was presented to the Schools Forum at the last meeting 18 October 2017.

Background / Context

Please see Appendix 1, which provides a summary of the proposals set out in the consultation. This consultation focused on High Needs Block technical and formula structure matters; how delegated budgets for individual providers are calculated and allocated in the 2018/19 financial year.

Please see Appendix 2, which provides an updated summary of places intended to be commissioned by the Authority in 2018/19.

Members are reminded that the DfE has announced that, under National Funding Formula, local authorities retain responsibility for the management of their High Needs Block funding arrangements, with flexibility to adjust the basic 'Place-Plus' structure according to local needs. There are a small number of technical adjustments directed by the DfE for 2018/19 and these were explained within the consultation document. The Minimum Funding Guarantee, for special schools, can be set by the Authority between 0% and minus 1.5%.

Members are also reminded that size and continuing growth of the cost pressure within the High Needs Block, together with the development of specialist places, is one of key issues the Authority, with the Schools Forum, must manage. The Schools Forum was presented in January 2017 with a 'trajectory' forecast, which estimated the position of the High Needs Block under National Funding Formula over the next 5 years. Together with consideration of the data presented on the insufficiency of places, this trajectory lay behind the Forum's recommendations / agreement for the transfer of £5.7m from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2017/18. The forecasted position of the High Needs Block from April 2018 is summarised in the separate Document IB.

Details of the Item for Consideration

Consultation Responses

Appendix 3 (to be tabled at the meeting) will provide an analysis of the formal responses received to the consultation. Members are encouraged to present to the meeting their feedback from their discussions with school colleagues.

Members are asked to consider whether any of the proposals should be amended in the light of feedback and / or whether further information is required in order for the Schools Forum to make its recommendations, on 10 January 2018.

Top Up Values (Plus Model) – Reduction of 1.5% in 2018/19

One of the key recommendations to be considered by the Schools Forum for 2018/19 is whether the values of top up allocated by the 7 Ranges Model remain at 2017/18 values or whether these are further reduced in order to support balancing the High Needs Block. As stated in Document IB, the figures for the High Needs Block summarised for this meeting include the assumption that the values of Plus funding allocated by the Ranges Model are reduced by 1.5%, reducing spending by c. £0.3m in 2018/19. The HNB trajectory evidences the need for continued control of Top Up values.

Details of the Item for Consideration

For reference, the table below summarises the values of Top Up that would be allocated following a 1.5% reduction (repeat of the information included within the consultation document).

Range	Plus Funding (annual value) 2017/18	Value of a 1.5% Reduction
Range 1	£0	n/a
Range 2	£0	n/a
Range 3	£0	n/a
Range 4A	£966.16	- £14
Range 4B	£3,045.23	- £46
Range 4C	£4,666.60	- £70
Range 4D	£7,269.52	- £109
Range 5	£10,599.32	- £159
Range 6	£14,122.18	- £212
Range 7	£23,205.05	- £348

SEND Review Proposals and Consultation

Forum Members are asked to note that a full presentation of the SEND Review proposals and consultation will be made to the meeting 10 January 2018.

Wider SEMH Review (Alternative Provision Review)

Forum Members are asked to note that a fuller presentation of the position of the wider SEMH review will be made to the meeting 10 January 2018.

This review incorporates the redesign of alternative provisions and the re-shaping of financial responsibilities between the High Needs Block and delegated school and academy budgets. Members are aware that the Authority's consultation on High Needs Block funding arrangements for 2018/19 included specifically the proposal to cease the HNB's double funding of the top up element of placements of non-EHCP pupils in the primary behaviour centres and Bradford Central PRU from 1 September 2018. The proposal crystallises the discussions that began with the Forum in autumn 2016. Under this model, the HNB will continue to fund an agreed number of places at £10,000 with the cost of any further top up being financed by the commissioning school / academy, or Behaviour Attendance Collaborative (BAC).

The wider SEMH review also brings in the financing of Bradford District PRU, as signalled in the consultation document, and the intention for the High Needs Block to cease its double funding of non-EHCP placements at this setting also from 1 September 2018. Further financial information on this is included in Document IB.

It is assumed that the Schools Forum will not recommend a further contribution, by top-slice, from the Schools Block in 2018/19 to meet High Needs Block pressures. This is a clear steer that has come from previous discussion in the Forum as well as from feedback to our consultations. Members will understand then that decisions around the allocation of the High Needs Block are crucial in balancing this budget. Decisions such as the removal of double funding of the non-EHCP placement Plus element in alternative provisions also have the effect of transferring financial responsibility from the High Needs Block to the Schools Block and the SEMH review's focus on the development of effective universal provision across all schools and academies is crucial in this context.

Permanent Exclusions – Primary Phase Local Agreement

A key aim of the wider SEMH review is to develop and implement a local agreement to support the financial management of pupils that are permanently excluded in the primary phase. In addition to the adjustment that is made by Regulations to the formula funding of schools and academies that permanently exclude a pupil, local agreements define additional financial adjustments that are made in order to support the cost of provision as well as the inclusion of pupils back into mainstream settings. Local agreements are well developed within the BACs in our secondary phase and are being widely developed across phases in other authorities.

The Authority proposes that the basis for a local agreement for the primary phase be that a school or academy will pay £8,000 per permanent exclusion to the Authority. This money will then support the provision made across the Authority in the Behaviour Centres, allow reintegration and assessment support and allow some monies to follow the child into their next setting to support the school that the pupil transfers to.

The Authority would welcome the School Forum's initial feedback on this proposal as well as the Forum's support for the development of a local agreement in the primary phase.

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

Yes – direct consequences for the High Needs Block as set out in summary in Document IB.

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 consider the outcomes of the consultation and whether any of the proposals should be changed in the light of responses. Members will be asked to make final recommendations on the structure of the formulae on 10 January 2018. As such, Members are asked to consider whether sufficient information has now been provided to enable these final recommendations to be made.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

Appendix 1 – Summary of Consultation Proposals
Appendix 2 – Summary of Bradford-located commissioned places 2018/19 (updated)
Appendix 3 – Analysis of Consultation Responses (to be tabled at the meeting)

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