

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 2019/20. This includes sight of the estimated 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 2018/19 high needs funding model on 18 October 2017 and set the High Needs Block budget in January 2018. 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 2019/20 funding model.

This report focuses on High Needs Block technical and formula structure matters; how delegated budgets for individual providers are calculated and allocated in the 2019/20 financial year.

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 2019/20 and these are explained within the consultation document.

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. Presented to the Schools Forum on 19 September 2018 was an outline of a proposal for 4 cross-block actions to support the balancing of the High Needs Block in 2019/20, including a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. This outline proposal was discussed in more detail with the Forum Members that attended one of the 3 Formula Funding Working Group meetings held at the beginning of October. This proposal is a significant part of the planned consultation on primary & secondary formula funding arrangements for 2019/20.

Details of the Item for Consideration

Consultation Document for Publication

Please see Appendix 1, which is the draft of the consultation paper setting out proposals for the funding of High Needs provision in 2019/20. This document includes information on how the funding system works.

The document (section 4) proposes continuity in most areas in 2019/20 but references especially the current review that is taking place on the funding approach to special schools, which will be highlighted for Members in the presentation of this report to the meeting.

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 structure of the funding model at this point.

Members will recall that we have in previous years published alongside the High Needs Block consultation a comparison of special school top up funding rates against national and statistical neighbour averages. The DfE's statistical release for 2018/19 data, which enables comparisons to be made and usually is available at the end of September, was published on 9 October. More considered comparisons will be presented to the Forum in December. An initial analysis indicates that our top up spending (as an amount per place) in special schools in 2018/19 closely matches national and statistical neighbour averages.

An Additional Note on Planned Places 2019/20

An indicative view of the number of places estimated to be funded in Bradford-located settings is given in Appendix 2 of the consultation document. These include the development of additional places. In summary:

Details of the Item for Consideration

- 2,327 SEND and 309 AP places (2,636 in total) are planned to be funded from the HNB for the 2019/20 academic year. This total excludes placements in out of authority and independent settings.
- This represents an increase of 114 places for the 2019/20 academic year on the places that were allocated within the 2018/19 HNB for the 2018/19 academic year.
- Looking slightly wider, 2,636 places for the 2019/20 academic year represents 688 more places in Bradford-located specialist settings than was initially planned to be funded from the HNB for the 2016/17 academic year (Document FO Appendix 1 presented to the Schools Forum 9 December 2015). This is the scale of the creation of places so far, and the scale of the additional cost within the HNB.
- The 688 separates as follows:
 - Special Schools + 294
 - Post 16 Further Education Sector + 218
 - DSPs (Primary & Secondary) + 115
 - PRUs + 55
 - Early Years DSPs + 10
 - ARCs - 4
- These places do not appear to have significantly altered our % of children and young people in special schools compared with national and other averages, although there has been movement. This is illustrated in the table below, albeit very simplistically. We have created a number of additional places in resourced provisions (DSPs), where the pupils are on the roll of the mainstream primary or secondary school not on the roll of a special school. So this position does require further exploration and analysis.

	Special School Population % Jan 18	Special School Population % Jan 15
Bradford	1.1%	0.9%
England	1.4%	1.2%
Statistical Neighbours	1.4%	1.3%
Met Districts	1.6%	1.4%

For quick reference, approximately an additional 315 places in special schools (on Jan 18 numbers) would bring us to the statistical neighbour average of 1.4%. The planned SEMH free school will add 72 specialist places.

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 2019/20.

List of Supporting Appendices / Papers (where applicable)

Appendix 1 - Consultation on Funding High Needs Provision 2019/20 (with its appendices)

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