

**REPORT TO:** School Forum

**DATE:** 13 June 2018

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director – Education,  
Inclusion and Provision

**SUBJECT:** High Needs update

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report seeks to provide an update on the High Needs funding. It sets out a range of further budget reductions required in 2018/2019. It also outlines the proposed new approach to discretionary top up funding (previously known as Enhanced Provision).

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) The Forum note the proposed budget reductions outlined in paragraph 3.2; and**
- 2) The Forum consider and comment on the Guidance for Supporting Pupils with SEND to ensure additional support is determined by a Headteacher panel and based on the specific needs of individual children.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 On 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018 it was reported that due to the increased demand for support for pupils with special educational needs, the level of complexity of some pupils and reduced flexibility to transfer money between the different funding blocks, Halton was facing a significant budget deficit of over £2.1 million in its High Needs Budget in 2018/2019.

3.2 Although a range of budget reductions were agreed, based on the indicative High Needs budget a shortfall of over £220,652 remained. To address this funding gap the following additional savings have been proposed:

<b>Funding Area</b>	<b>Saving</b>
SEND Commissioner Post	£21,000
Behaviour Support Team	£64,156
Home Tutors	£50,000
Inclusion Staffing and Supply and Services Reductions	£52,971
Reserves	£32,525

<b>Total</b>	<b>£220,652</b>
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- 3.3 It was estimated that, unlike in previous years, where Halton has had a healthy reserve, once commitments had been allowed for, most of the reserves would be accounted for. Final figures for 2018/2019 now show that after commitments, there will be a small balance of £153,754. It was intended to use this funding to contribute towards the funding gap in High Needs and support the discretionary support for schools.
- 3.4 However, on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018 the Education and Skills Funding Agency wrote to the LA, advising that in error they had over allocated the High Needs Block by £104,000 and would be looking to recoup this funding in July 2018. The error made was due to change in funding for Resource Provision places in mainstream schools. Representation has been made to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
- 3.5 This proposed reduction of £104,000, reduces the available balance to £49,754. £32,525 of this sum is required to balance the budget shortfall. It is proposed the remaining balance of £17,229 be used to support discretionary top up funding (enhanced provision).
- 3.6 The budget allocated to provide top up funding for both primary and secondary mainstream schools for 2018/2019 is £1million. This budget covers the costs of Education, Health and Care Plans and Discretionary Top Up Funding (Enhanced Provision). A summary is provided below:

<b>Total Top Up Budget</b>	<b>£1,000,000</b>
Funding allocated in April 2018	£640,866
Additional In-Year Allocations	£42,975
Provision for future EHCP provision	£250,000
Provision for discretionary Support (Enhanced Provision)	£66,159

- 3.7 A total budget has now been identified of £83,388 for Discretionary Top up Funding (Enhanced Provision).
- 3.8 The current arrangements for supporting pupils with SEND have now been reviewed and Guidance on supporting pupils with SEND has been developed. (Appendix A). This documents sets out the roles and responsibilities of the different partners and the criteria for applying for discretionary support previously known as Enhanced Provision.
- 3.9 It is suggested that the ring fenced, cash limited budget for discretionary top up funding is delegated to a Panel of Headteachers or Senior School Staff from both the Primary and Secondary sector. LA Officers will attend the meeting but in an advisory capacity.

- 3.10 A response to the Disapplication Request submitted in relation to the Special Schools budgets has now been received. The correspondence from the Education Funding and Skills Agency received on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 advises that the Secretary of State considered the case submitted and has grant his approval on condition that the individual schools have agreed to it and that the average reduction in top up funding that schools receive will be around -5%. Special Schools budgets will now need to be re-calculated.
- 3.11 In May 2018 Peopletoo were commissioned to undertake a review of SEND in Halton. Through this review we want to achieve the following:
- Detailed understanding of our SEND population
  - Detailed understanding of our special school population and pupil profile
  - Detailed understanding of our future needs and profiles of specialist provision to meet that need
  - Detailed understanding of future post 16 needs and opportunities to improve provision and capacity in our local communities
  - Detailed understanding of the views of all stakeholders in terms of existing strengths and opportunities to improve high needs provision
  - Detailed understanding of perceived barriers to inclusion in mainstream schools and colleges with recommendations for potential solutions
  - Detailed understanding of the total level of resources available and how to effectively target these to meet need
  - Detailed understanding of potential challenges, sensitivities and conflicts of interest, together with potential solutions to these.
- 3.12 A final report will be produced by the Peopletoo by the end of September 2018.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The initial budgets allocated to the four special schools were based on the minimum funding guarantee of minus 1.5%. Each budget will now be recalculated in line with the approved disapplication.
- 4.2 The contingency provision allocated to fund additional pupils placed in Halton's special schools has now been calculated. Further demand will lead to a budget overspend.
- 4.3 If the level of demand for placing pupils in independent provision continues to increase the current budget provision will be insufficient.
- 4.4 There is only limited funding available to support discretionary top up provision.

## **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 The Guidance for supporting pupils with SEND clarifies the role and responsibility of schools, the LA and the criteria for application for additional discretionary funding.
- 5.2 An independent review of SEND provision in Halton commenced on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and is expected to conclude by the end of September 2018.

## **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 6.1 Most children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities should receive support within their schools and setting's budget.

## **7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

- 7.1 None.