

**REPORT TO:** School Forum

**DATE:** 13 June 2018

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

**SUBJECT:** High Needs update

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

**1.1** This report seeks to provide an update on the High Needs funding.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

**2.1** School Forum note the responses received to the consultation;

**2.2** School Forum consider whether they wish to support either option 1 the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Budget to High Needs or option 2 the transfer of 1% from the Schools Budget to High Needs budget;

**2.3** School Forum support the plans outlined to reduce the demand on the high needs budget.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**3.1** On Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2018 a consultation paper was issued to all schools on the proposal to transfer funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2019/2020.

**3.2** The consultation paper set out the funding allocated to schools alongside the funding for High Needs. It showed the level of overspend in the High Needs budget since 2015/2016 with an estimate for 2018/2019. Details were provided of the costs each year of additional or specialist provision with estimated costs to the end of the financial year.

**3.3** It explained that there had been an increase in the complexity of need and demand and that this had not been met by a corresponding increase in funding. Following consultation in 2017/2018 it was agreed that 0.5% could be transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block this arrangements was for one year only. Schools and School Forum would need to be consulted on any proposed transfer of funding for 2019/2020. Please see Appendix A.

**3.4** Schools were invited to attend a briefing session at the Stadium on Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018. Any questions raised at this event

plus the responses was then circulated to all schools prior to the close of the consultation on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

- 3.5 In total seventeen schools responded to the consultation. Appendix B shows the responses received alongside any comments made. As part of the consultation schools were asked three questions:

#### **Question 1**

Do you agree to the transfer of 0.5% of Schools Block funds, to be taken from the Basic Per Pupil funding factor, to the High Needs Block for 2019-20?

17 schools responded – 14 supported the proposal and 3 did not

#### **Question 2**

Do you agree to the transfer of 1.0% of Schools Block funds, to be taken from the Basic Per Pupil funding factor, to the High Needs Block for 2019-20?

17 schools responded - 10 schools supported the proposal to transfer 1% and 7 schools did not.

#### **Question 3**

Do you agree to not transfer any funding from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2019-20 on the understanding that all top-up funding levels would have to be reduced to keep the High Needs Block within budget?

17 schools responded – 2 schools supported the proposal to not transfer any funding and 15 schools did not.

- 3.6 School Forum are therefore asked if they will consider the transfer of 1% of the School Funding block to the High Needs Block which is estimated to be £854,334. As School Forums can only approve application of 0.5%, an application would then need to be submitted to the Secretary of State.

### **4.0 FUTURE PLANS**

- 4.1 Halton continues to seek an increase in the level of high needs funding alongside the other authorities through both the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Children's Services.
- 4.2 Independent consultants "Peopletoo" have been commissioned to undertake a comprehensive review of Halton SEND making recommendations that identify key strategic opportunities to support the Authority and partners in achieving our ambition to ensure that all

children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have access to a range of provision and support across the borough, which meets their educational needs, provides good opportunities for them to progress and is sustainable. "Peopletoo" will complete the review by the end of September and present it to the Local Authority for consideration in October 2018.

- 4.3 Challenging behaviour has been identified as a key issue in the borough which has led to increased budget pressures. The recruitment has now been completed for a new Behaviour Support Team. The team will be in place after October half term and will aim to work with schools to promote positive behaviour, offering training and building the capacity of staff to deal with children with challenging behaviour.
- 4.4 On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018 Executive Board approved the development of two 6 place Foundation/ Key Stage 1 Resources Bases for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health. It is planned that this new provision will commence in September 2019.
- 4.5 A joint application with St Helen's MBC will be submitted on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 seeking capital funding to develop a 50 place Secondary Free school for pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health.
- 4.6 A new Placements Division has been established. The Division will be responsible for the commissioning of high quality children's social care and special educational needs placements, ensuring all placements are robust, improve outcomes and offer the best value for money.
- 4.7 To promote greater inclusion in schools a conference is being held at the Stadium for Headteachers on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018.
- 4.8 A panel of School representatives will now meet to consider all applications for Discretionary top up based on the criteria agreed in July 2018 and the agreed budget.
- 4.9 A review of the funding formula for specialist provision will be undertaken in 2018/2019.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Secretary of State approved a disapplication for the four special schools for 2018/2019. A commitment was given to review the funding formula for the four special schools in 2018/2019.
- 5.2 Any overspend from 2018/2019 will need to be the first call on the 2018/2019 budget.

## **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 There is concern that the level of demand on the high needs budget will

continue to increase. The High Needs Review has been considering the changes needed in Halton to ensure that we can continue to appropriately support our children and young people with SEND whilst reducing costs.

## **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.