

REPORT TO: School Forum

DATE: 11th October 2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Education, Inclusion & Provision

SUBJECT: High Needs Block Funding for 2018-19

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report to the School Forum the High Needs Block Funding proposals for 2018-19.

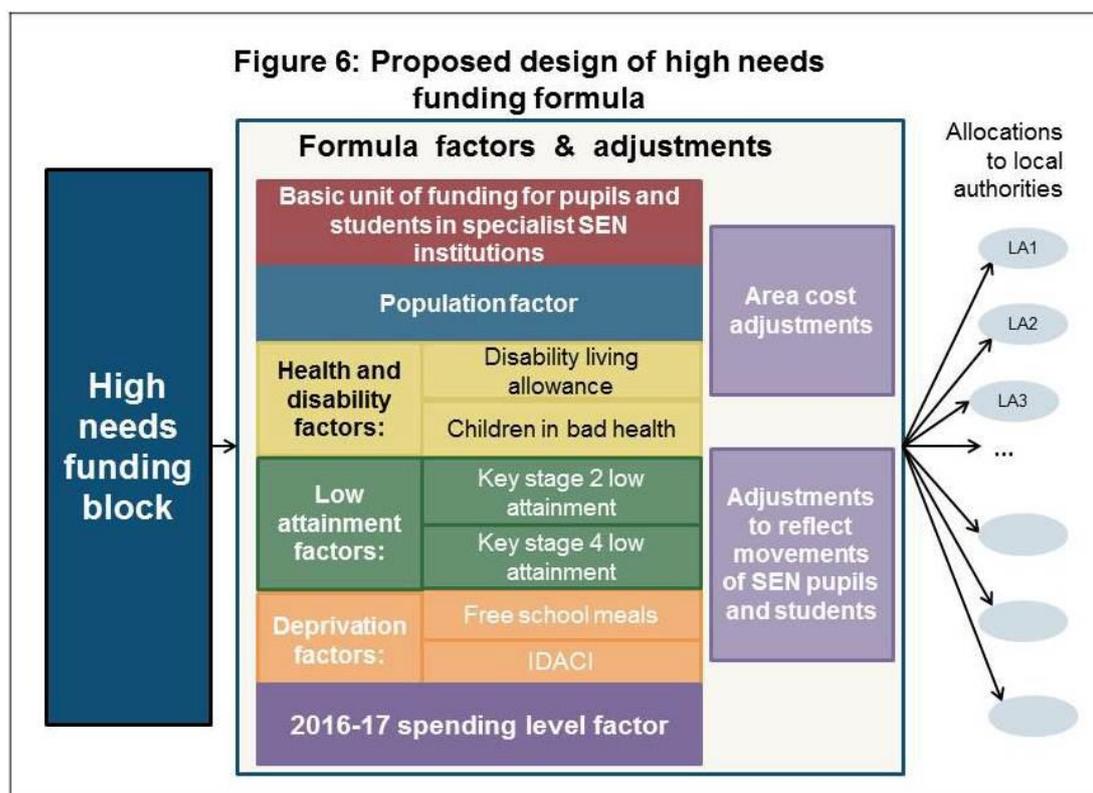
2.0 RECOMMENDATION

(1) The report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

The DfE issued a Stage One consultation on High Needs Funding in March 2016 with proposals on how allocations to LA's would be calculated from April 2018. This was followed up by a Stage Two consultation in December 2016. The basis of allocation to each LA is as follows:



- 3.2 Following a baseline exercise we have been given an indicative budget of £14.3m after recoupment. There is to be a 0.5% uplift in High Needs funding which we hope will be in the region of £72k but it has not yet been confirmed on what basis the 0.5% will be calculated.
- 3.3 We are waiting to hear the outcome of the Stage 2 consultation that closed in March 2017. Further guidance regarding high needs funding for 2018-19 is due to be released in September 2017 and will be tabled at the meeting.
- 3.4 At this point in time, having estimated the budgets required for 2018-19 we will need funding of £15.3m. We are allowed, following consultation with schools and with the approval of Schools Forum, to transfer up to 0.5% of the total Schools Block budget – roughly £415k – to the High Needs block. For any transfer above 0.5% of Schools Block we must also get approval from the Secretary of State.
- 3.5 At the end of the 2016/2017 financial year we were spending in the region of £2.6million on placing 62 pupils in specialist out of borough provision. Over the last few years we have seen a marked increase in the number of children and young people placed out of borough and the costs of each placement has significantly increased. As there is a shortage of Local Authority provision it is becoming a providers market. When pupils are placed in out of borough provision they often complete their education at the setting they are placed at. This is both costly and in many cases prevents them from developing relationships within their local community.
- 3.6 The cost, quality, vulnerability and the need for extra scrutiny of these placements has been discussed at the SEN Review Meeting and it has been suggested that we seek permission from School Forum to employ a Commissioner who will undertake the following:
- Manage the market working with other LAs to look at the cost of provision;
 - Negotiate most cost effective arrangements for out of borough placements;
 - Monitor the quality and suitability of all out of borough placements; and
 - Seek opportunities to work with settings to reintegrated children and young people placed out of borough back into local schools and settings
- 3.7 In order to undertake this role it would be necessary to fund a dedicated Commissioner at Grade HBC11. The estimated cost of this role would be in the region of £51,000 per annum and would need to be met from the High Needs budget. However, by recruiting to this post we aim to drive down the costs and number of pupils placed out of borough, challenging the costs charged and ensuring that the settings can demonstrate impact and positive outcomes and in many cases have plans in place to reintegrate or reduce the support the child or young person requires.
- 3.8 To address the rising cost of SEND support in the Borough it has been agreed that an All Age Review of SEND be undertaken. This will be commissioned externally and will explore demand, the causes of demand and how we can better meet the needs of children and young people in a more sustainable way in future years.
- 3.9 In addition to this piece of work Halton are working alongside the five other Liverpool

City Region Authorities to look review SEN sufficiency. This review will look at the current provision and demand across the Liverpool City Region.

- 3.10 The Headteacher of the Bridge in Halton was commissioned to undertake a Behaviour Review this work has now been completed and a detailed report will be presented to the School Forum meeting in January.
- 3.11 Between September 2017 and March 2018 a review of the top up levels allocated to pupils placed at the PRU will be undertaken with a view to introducing any changes from April 2018.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None

5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None