



Schools Forum

Wednesday, 15 January 2020 4.00 p.m.
Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

*Please contact Ann Jones - Tel: 0151 511 8276 or email:
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Wednesday, 26 February 2020*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. MINUTES	
(A) 16 OCTOBER 2019	1 - 5
(B) 11 DECEMBER 2019	6 - 7
3. DSG FORECAST OUTTURN 2019/20	8 - 12
4. SCHOOLS BLOCK FUNDING FOR 2020/21	13 - 15
5. HIGH NEEDS COMMISSIONING TEAM PRESENTATION	
6. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF HIGH NEEDS	16 - 18

In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

SCHOOLS FORUM

At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Wednesday, 16 October 2019 at Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillor T. McInerney (Observer)
 A. Jones, Democratic Services, HBC
 A. McIntyre, Education, Inclusion & Provision, HBC
 A. Jones, Financial Management, HBC
 R. Sprigings, Financial Management, HBC
 N Shafiq, Financial Management, HBC
 K. Landrum, (Chair) Primary School with a Nursery Representative
 K. Albiston, PVI Representative
 A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative
 J. O'Connor, PVI Representative
 T. Bell, 16-19 Provision Representative
 N. Hunt, Pupil Referral Unit Representative
 J. Wilson, Secondary Governor Representative
 A. Simmons, Community Primary Representative
 J. McConville, Secondary Academy Representative
 H. Austin, Community Special Schools Representative
 L. Roberts, Small Primary Representative
 E. Hall, All Through School Representative (Sub)

Action

SCF7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Emlyn Wright, Ian Critchley, Jackie Coughlan and Angela Sheppard.

SCF8 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record. It was noted that C. Liko was the Community Nursery Representative; the named substitute for A. Brown (not Community Primary Representative).

SCF9 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Forum received a membership update and noted the information contained in the report. Forum Members wished to record their thanks to Syd Broxton for his dedication and service on the Forum over the years.

RESOLVED: That the update is confirmed and noted.

SCF10 FUNDING UPDATE 2021

The Forum received the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding updates for 2020-21 in relation to the following:

- Funding for 2020-21;
- Schools Block confirmed updates;
- High Needs Block;
- Central Schools Services Block;
- Early Years Block; and
- Teachers Pay Grant and Teachers Pension Grant.

It was noted that modelling work would be completed and the consultation issued to schools on the proposed funding formula for 2020-21. This would be presented to Schools Forum prior to a decision being requested from the Executive Board.

Officers advised that the provisional budget allocations had just been received (Monday 14 October) and some areas were due after half term; these would be sent to Forum Members as soon they were received by them. A special meeting was requested to approve the budgets following the consultation and this was agreed. Members would be notified of the date as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That the report is noted.

SCF11 HIGH NEEDS UPDATE

The Schools Forum received an update on the final High Needs outturn for 2018-19.

It was reported that for 2018-19 the High Needs DSG was £241,786 over the allocated budget; a table was presented in paragraph 3.1, which showed the level of spend against budget for the key areas.

It was noted by Members that the profile of expenditure on High Needs had changed over the last 12 months since the original budgets were set. There had been a significant increase in the special school populations both in and out of the Borough, which had meant that the four Halton special schools were providing places for many more children and young people than previously and were up to maximum capacity. This increase in numbers and complexity of pupils' needs had also been reflected in the special schools funding.

Financial
Management,
HBC

Officers provided some commentary around the level of spend in these key areas to help explain the variances. They also advised that due to the increased pressures on High Needs it had been recognised that there was a need to provide accurate and timely information to Schools Forum, so it had been agreed that a DSG Outturn report would be presented at each meeting.

Further to a query regarding the recently established Commissioning Unit; it was suggested that they make a presentation to the Forum at the January meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Operational Director
Education, Inclusion and Provision -

SCF12 DSG OUTTURN 2018/19

The Forum was provided with the final Dedicated Schools Grant position for 2018-19 for the Central Schools Services Block; Early Years Block and High Needs Block (this was discussed in the previous report).

A detailed breakdown of the year-end position was attached at Appendix A of the report, which was noted by Members.

Officers outlined the DSG Outturn Forecast for 2019-20 by means of a presentation. This would be emailed to the Forum Members following the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report and presentation are noted.

Financial Management, HBC

SCF13 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF HIGH NEEDS

The Forum was presented with a report on the recent review of High Needs Provision undertaken by independent Consultants *Peopletoo*.

It was reported that in February 2019 Executive Board approved the recommendations from the independent review of High Needs Provision, undertaken by *Peopletoo*. They also approved funding to *Peopletoo* to lead on the next steps of the project, the revision and redesign of both the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process and provision within the Borough.

The report explained the three workstreams that the project had been split into: *Identifying Need*, *Meeting Need* and the *Pupil Referral Unit*. It was commented that the aim was for these three workstreams to be completed by

December 2019. Following this a report would be submitted to the January meeting of the Executive Board, setting out the proposed changes for their consideration. If the recommendations are agreed, formal consultation on the revised arrangement would then be undertaken.

The following was noted / clarified after presentation of the item:

- A report on the findings and recommendations of *Peopletoo* would be submitted to the January meeting of the Schools Forum prior to being submitted to Executive Board for approval;
- If the recommendations were agreed by Executive Board, the formal consultation would include all schools;
- A partnership approach was being taken and health colleagues from different disciplines were very much involved; and
- An example of proactivity when dealing with a shortage of special school places this year at Brookfields was provided, where they were accommodated at The Grange Academy.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) notes the report;
- 2) supports the progress of the revision and redesign of High Needs; and
- 3) requests a further report is submitted at the next School's Forum meeting.

Operational Director
Education, Inclusion and Provision

SCF14 HALTON'S SCHEME FOR FINANCING SCHOOLS (SFFS) UPDATE

The Forum received a report that presented the consultation response and proposed changes to the Halton Scheme for financing Schools (SFFS) for August 2019.

It was reported that the Department for Education issued updates to Schemes for Financing Schools, which local authorities were required to consider or implement. There was a requirement for the LA to consult with all maintained schools on the updates before requesting Schools Forum approval of the updates.

Appended to the report at Appendix A was the proposed SFFS document August 2019 and the consultation

document was appended at Appendix B. Although only 3 responses had been received saying they were in agreement with the proposed changes, it was recommended that the updates be accepted with immediate effect.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum

- 1) notes the consultation responses; and
- 2) agrees the proposed changes to Halton's SFFS and that they be effective immediately.

SCF15 CONTINGENCY UPDATE

Forum Members received a report on the level of School Contingency and staff dismissal budget and an update on the approved requests to date.

It was noted that the Schools Contingency was the sum delegated to those schools maintained by the Local Authority (LA). Halton schools had agreed that this sum is de-delegated and managed centrally. It was reported that the total budget for 2019/2020 is £198.252.

The report outlined the circumstances in which the funding could be used; the circumstances in which applications could be considered by the Schools Forum; and the procedure for applying for additional funding from the contingency.

Members noted the two approved applications for funding received and considered in 2018-19 (Ditton and Simms Cross Primaries) with a commitment for the additional funding to be paid in 2019-20. They also noted the remaining budget balance for staff dismissals at £21,805.98 following an approval of a request from Woodside Primary School.

Officers advised that there had been further requests for financial assistance from some schools and asked for volunteers to sit on a sub group. Lyn Roberts, Jim Wilson, Jane O'Connor and Judith McConville would be contacted in due course to arrange a suitable date for the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum notes the current commitments agreed from the contingency and staff dismissals.

Operational
Director -
Education,
Inclusion and
Provision

Meeting ended at 5.05 p.m.

SCHOOLS FORUM

At a meeting of the Schools Forum on Wednesday, 11 December 2019 at Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present:

A. Jones, Democratic Services, HBC
 A. McIntyre, Education, Inclusion & Provision, HBC
 A. Jones, Financial Management, HBC
 R. Springs, Financial Management, HBC
 A. Brown, Nursery Schools Representative
 J. O'Connor, PVI Representative
 T. Bell, 16-19 Provision Representative
 J. Coughlan, Primary Representative - Infant School
 J. Wilson, Vice Chair (In the Chair) Secondary Governor Representative
 S. Corner, Secondary Academy Representative
 A. Sheppard, VA Schools Representative
 I. Critchley, All Through Schools Representative
 L. Roberts, Small Primary Representative

Action

SCF16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Karl Landrum, Nigel Hunt, Heather Austin and Anne Simmons.

SCF17 SCHOOLS BLOCK FUNDING FORMULA FOR 2020-21

The Forum received the Schools Block Funding Formula for 2020-21.

It was reported that the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant was ring fenced and Local Authorities were required to fully devolve this block to their mainstream primary and secondary schools/academies. The only exception was where a request is made to transfer funds to the High Needs Block; which was not required for 2020-21.

Members were advised that the Council had moved to the National Funding Formula (NFF) in 2018-19 and officers had consulted schools on their recommendation to remain on this formula. The report outlined the funding factors and criteria for each. The report also discussed the Minimum level of per pupil funding (MPPF); the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG); and de-delegation of funding.

Further to the consultation, (from 12 to 26 November 2019), 22 responses were received to the following questions:

1. Do you agree that we continue to adopt the NFF method, principles and rules for the funding formula to be applied to primary and secondary schools and academies for 2020-21?

All schools responded positively with no comments.

2. Do you agree to Schools Forum determining the level of the Minimum Funding Guarantee at the January meeting?

21 schools responded positively with no comments.

The Forum noted the consultation responses and Officers responded to Forum Members' queries on the information provided in the report. The Forum was requested to support the continuation of the National Funding Formula methods, principles and rules for mainstream primary and secondary funding allocations for 2020-21; this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED: That Schools Forum supports the continuation of the National Funding Formula methods, principles and rules for mainstream primary and secondary funding allocations for 2020-21.

Meeting ended at 4.20 p.m.

REPORT TO: Schools Forum

DATE: 15 January 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Senior Finance Officer

SUBJECT: DSG forecast outturn for 2019-20

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report to the Schools Forum the DSG forecast outturn for 2019-20 as at 09/12/19.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report is noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Schools Block

The Schools Block must be fully devolved to mainstream primary and secondary schools by use of the approved funding formula, with the exception of the agreed transfer to the High Needs Block. For 2019-20 this transfer was agreed at 1%, which equates to £869,312 with the balance being fully devolved through the formula.

3.2 Central School Services Block

We are expecting the CSSB to come in over budget by £36,232 due to the reimbursement of suspension costs. We are expecting to underspend on the contribution to the Safeguarding post and the Premature Retirement budgets which offsets some of the overspend on the Staff Responsibilities budget. The Schools Contingency budget is being shown as fully spent as this is expected with the business cases submitted for Schools Forum consideration for financial assistance.

3.3 Early Years Block

At this point in time we are forecasting to come in over budget by £43,850. This is based on estimates for the Spring Term free entitlement provision for 2, 3 and 4 year olds resulting in an overspend of £261,801. We are seeing underspends totalling £217,951 on Inclusion funding, staffing, supplies & services as well as the contingency budget. However, until we receive the January 2020 EY census data we cannot calculate the DSG adjustment that we will receive in July 2020 which could significantly impact on the outturn position.

3.4 High Needs Block

The forecast outturn position is an overspend of £641,508. The key areas of overspend are Independent Special Schools, Inter Authority

Recoupment and Top-up funding which show a combined forecast overspend of £1,389,846. The Specialist Teams and Inclusion Division staffing are generally coming in under budget at a combined total of £250,523 which, along with the High Needs Contingency of £497,815 has reduced the forecast overspend by more than half.

3.5 Reserves

The balance carried forward from 2018-19 is £347,563 to support areas that are coming in over budget.

3.6 Summary

We are forecasting our outturn at £374,027 over budget for 2019-20 based on current information. We have built in all known and expected costs. Monthly monitoring of expenditure and forecast outturn is continuing and is being discussed with Senior Managers on a regular basis.

The current forecast equates to -0.33% of the overall DSG allocation to Halton.

The detailed breakdown for all four blocks is attached at Appendix A.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 An in-year overspend against the DSG in excess of our carried forward balance will have first call against our grant allocation for 2020-21.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

It is essential that schools and education support services receive sufficient funding to allow them to support all children and young people.

5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

5.4 A Safer Halton

None.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The outturn currently forecast will undoubtedly change as so much of the central expenditure is based upon demand which can change from day to day. Stringent measures and monitoring are in place to minimise.

spending, subject to the LA and all schools and academies working together.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The Local Authority must discharge its statutory responsibilities in relation to all schools and settings.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None.

DSG Forecast Outturn for 2019-20

As at 09-12-19

Summary	Original budget	Current budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
Schools Block	£ 86,061,846	£ 86,061,846	£ 86,061,846	-£	0
Central Schools Services Block	£ 667,546	£ 564,600	£ 600,832	-£	36,232
Early Years Block	£ 9,631,209	£ 9,817,365	£ 9,861,215	-£	43,850
High Needs Block	£ 14,836,285	£ 14,836,285	£ 15,477,793	-£	641,508
DSG carry forward (central)	£ 347,563	£ 347,563	£ -	£	347,563
Total DSG	£ 111,544,449	£ 111,627,659	£ 112,001,686	-£	374,027

-0.33%

Schools Block

Primary (before de-delegation)	£ 44,705,521	£ 44,705,521	£ 44,705,521	£	0
Secondary (before de-delegation)	£ 41,356,325	£ 41,356,325	£ 41,356,326	-£	1
Total Schools Block	£ 86,061,846	£ 86,061,846	£ 86,061,846	-£	0

Central Schools Services Block

Safeguarding post contribution	£ 47,100	£ 47,100	£ 35,500	£	11,600
Licences	£ 102,360	£ 102,360	£ 102,360	£	-
Teachers Panel	£ 19,460	£ 19,460	£ 19,460	£	-
Premature Retirement costs	£ 100,000	£ 100,000	£ 59,380	£	40,620
Transfer to High Needs Block	£ 102,946	£ -	£ -	£	-
Staff Responsibilities (de-del)	£ 25,470	£ 25,470	£ 117,533	-£	92,063
FSM Eligibility contribution (de-del)	£ 6,520	£ 6,520	£ 6,520	£	-
Dismissals Costs (de-del)	£ 127,110	£ 127,110	£ 127,110	£	-
Schools Contingency (de-del)	£ 198,780	£ 198,780	£ 198,780	£	-
De-delegated income	-£ 357,880	-£ 357,880	-£ 357,880	£	-

Former ESG Retained Duties

Revenue budget preparation/Formulation and review of LA schools funding formula	£ 80,660	£ 80,660	£ 80,660	£	-
Director of children's services/Planning for the education service as a whole	£ 88,360	£ 88,360	£ 87,521	£	839
Admissions service contribution	£ 8,430	£ 8,430	£ 8,430	£	-
SACRE	£ 2,910	£ 2,910	£ 2,910	£	-
Investigation of Complaints contribution	£ 7,610	£ 7,610	£ 7,610	£	-
Administrative costs and overheads	£ 107,710	£ 107,710	£ 107,710	£	-

Former ESG General Duties

Budgeting and accounting functions relating to m	£ 21,000	£ 21,000	£ 21,000	£	-
Asset Management contribution	£ 46,560	£ 46,560	£ 43,788	£	2,772
Health & Safety contribution	£ 60,000	£ 60,000	£ 60,000	£	-
De-delegated income	-£ 127,560	-£ 127,560	-£ 127,560	£	-

Total Central Schools Services Block	£ 667,546	£ 564,600	£ 600,832	-£	36,232
---	------------------	------------------	------------------	-----------	---------------

Early Years Block

Nursery Schools	£ 1,007,757	£ 1,007,757	£ 1,007,757	-£	0
Nursery Units	£ 463,745	£ 463,745	£ 463,745	£	-
PVI - 3 & 4 yo provision	£ 6,274,521	£ 6,274,521	£ 6,454,035	-£	179,514
Early Years Pupil Premium	£ 143,180	£ 143,180	£ 143,180	£	-
Disability Access Fund	£ 45,510	£ 45,510	£ 45,510	£	-
2 yo provision	£ 1,421,035	£ 1,421,040	£ 1,503,327	-£	82,287
EYFS Business Rates	£ 24,210	£ 24,210	£ 24,210	£	-
EY Inclusion Funding	£ 40,000	£ 40,000	£ 24,973	£	15,027
Staffing - 2, 3 & 4 yo provision	£ 166,370	£ 166,370	£ 142,479	£	23,891
Supplies & Services - 2, 3 & 4 yo provision	£ 40,240	£ 40,240	£ 2,000	£	38,240
Contribution to IWIST	£ 50,000	£ 50,000	£ 50,000	£	-
EY contingency	-£ 45,359	£ 140,793	£ -	£	140,793
Estimated final budget adjustment (Jul 20) - not yet calculated	£ -	£ -	£ -	£	-
Total Early Years Block	£ 9,631,209	£ 9,817,365	£ 9,861,215	-£	43,850

High Needs Block

Special Schools & Academies	£	5,097,422	£	5,097,422	£	5,097,422	£	-
Resource Bases	£	1,378,478	£	1,378,478	£	1,378,478	£	-
PRU	£	1,500,000	£	1,500,000	£	1,500,000	£	-
Top-up funding	£	1,000,000	£	1,000,000	£	1,197,469	-£	197,469
Special Schools Equipment	£	20,000	£	20,000	£	20,000	£	-
Specialist Provision:								
Visually Impaired	£	113,930	£	113,930	£	70,263	£	43,667
Cognition & Learning	£	119,650	£	119,650	£	104,540	£	15,110
Communication, Language & ASD	£	105,310	£	105,310	£	96,029	£	9,281
Hearing Impaired	£	195,970	£	195,970	£	225,481	-£	29,511
Home Tuition	£	286,340	£	286,340	£	176,295	£	110,045
Education Psychology Service	£	107,950	£	107,950	£	102,326	£	5,624
Independent Special Schools	£	2,412,450	£	2,412,450	£	3,397,855	-£	985,405
Inter-Authority Recoupment	£	175,000	£	175,000	£	381,972	-£	206,972
Post 16 Provision	£	969,000	£	969,000	£	933,887	£	35,113
Behaviour Support Team	£	318,740	£	318,740	£	328,283	-£	9,543
HN Contingency	£	497,815	£	497,815	£	-	£	497,815
Inclusion Division staffing	£	538,230	£	538,230	£	467,493	£	70,737
Total High Needs Block	£	14,836,285	£	14,836,285	£	15,477,793	-£	641,508

REPORT TO: Schools Forum

DATE: 15th January 2020

REPORTING OFFICER: Senior Finance Officer

SUBJECT: Schools Block funding for 2020-21

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report to the Schools Forum the Schools Block funding for 2020-21.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 The report is noted.
- 2.2 The level of Minimum Funding Guarantee to be applied to the Schools Block funding formula for 2020-21 is agreed.
- 2.3 That maintained school representatives decide by phase which de-delegated budgets they agree to fund in 2020-21.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Grant settlement

The Dedicated Schools Grant settlement was announced on 19th December giving a total of £92,581,025 for the Schools Block for 2020-21, an increase of £5,649,868 to the 2019-20 settlement.

3.2 Pupil Numbers

Pupil numbers in primary and secondary mainstream schools have again increased overall, although primary numbers have decreased.

	2020-21	2019-20	Variance
Primary	10,671	10,720	-49
Secondary	7,610	7,427	183
Total	18,281	18,147	134

3.3 Current position

As in previous years at the time of writing the individual Schools Block budgets have not been calculated. As the October census data and grant allocations have now been received, we should be able to table the indicative allocations at the meeting. Once approval has been given by the ESFA to our funding formula, we will confirm individual Schools Block budgets for 2020-21.

3.4 Minimum Funding Guarantee

We are required to agree the level of MFG to be applied to the Schools Block funding formula for 2020-21. As per the outcome of the

consultation with schools, the decision on the level of MFG is to be taken at the January meeting of Schools Forum. For 2020-21 the level of MFG can be set between plus 0.5% and plus 1.84%. The recommendation of the actual level of MFG will be tabled at the meeting but it is thought it can be set at the highest level of 1.84%.

3.5 De-delegation

Maintained school representatives will be asked to decide at the January meeting which de-delegated budgets they wish to fund for 2020-21. The services, per pupil amounts and totals for each school will be tabled at the meeting as they have not yet been calculated.

3.6 Transfer of funding to the High Needs Block

For 2020-21 the High Needs Block allocation has increased by £2,292,555. We have not requested any formal transfer of funds from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block for 2020-21. Therefore, the grant of £92,581,025 will be fully allocated to mainstream schools and academies through the Schools Block funding formula. If we do overspend or plans for 2020-2021 exceed our budget allocation then a transfer from schools and School Forum in 2021-2022 will be sought.

However, in line with the Inclusion Charter developed with schools in 2019 and school's responsibility as part of the Local Offer, we would hope to see schools using this funding to improve their provision for children and young people with SEND, thereby reducing the need for specialist placements.

Please see agenda item 6 for an update on the Peopletoo Findings and Recommendations.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Schools Block funding formula must comply with all relevant regulations as set out by the Department for Education.

4.2 If de-delegation is rejected for any budget by any phase of maintained schools, the Council will need to decide if it can source other funding to continue the service(s) to schools.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

It is essential that schools and education support services receive sufficient funding to allow them to support all children and young people.

5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

5.4 A Safer Halton

None.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 We need to comply with the regulations otherwise could have formula imposed on us.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The Local Authority must discharge its statutory responsibilities in relation to all schools and settings.

REPORT TO:	Schools Forum
DATE:	15th January 2020
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director – Education, Inclusion and Provision
SUBJECT:	Independent Review of High Needs
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide the Forum with a progress report on the independent review of high needs provision in Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Schools Forum

- 2.1 Note the report;
- 2.2 Support the progress of the revision and redesign of High Needs;
- 2.3 Consider the proposed funding of the Educational Psychology Service; and
- 2.4 Request a further report to be submitted at the next School Forum meeting.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 School Forum received a report on 16th October 2019 on the progress each of the three workstreams had made to date. Forum members were advised at the time that December 2019 had been set as a target for the completion of each of the three workstreams. However, given a number of local developments, the scale and complexity of the task, the need to ensure participation by all stakeholders in the proposed redesign and the sustainability of any future changes, the date for completion has been reviewed and the revised indicative target date is March 2020.
- 3.2 Once the work is complete the findings will be reported to the Senior Management Team of the Council for consideration and a report will then be produced for the Executive Board of the Council, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the SEND Strategic Board. If the recommendations in the report are agreed, formal consultation on the revised arrangements will then be undertaken.
- 3.3 However, there have been a number of issues that have emerged as part of the review and redesign which School Forum may wish to consider and take a view on so that changes can be made for 2020-2021 financial year.
- 3.4 Much of the valuable preventative work for schools by the Educational Psychology Service is only provided on a traded basis. Support is

therefore allocated to schools on the basis of their ability to pay not their level of need. In addition, the demand for Educational Psychology Service support has increased over the last few years. Providing more consistent and equitable support across all schools could be achieved if it was agreed that the service ceased to trade and that the High Needs budget pick up these costs. Schools would then receive support based on a formula which reflected their size and the level of need. The estimated costs of this development is £100,000.

3.5 You will have seen from the earlier report on School Forum that schools will receive a significant increase in their funding for 2020-2021. We are proposing that schools receive this funding in full and that for 2020-2021 there is not a transfer across to High Needs. This allows funding for Halton to remain within Halton and to be invested in local mainstream provision. However, we hope that schools will utilise this funding to increase their support for pupils with SEND both at primary and secondary phase and so that we can see a reduction in the demand for high cost specialist placements or the High Needs budget will continue to overspend in 2020-2021.

3.6 There a high number of fixed and permanent exclusions from Secondary schools and many of these excluded children and young people have had to be placed in high cost out of borough or independent provision. A paper will be taken to the Halton Association of Secondary Heads Meeting in February which sets out a different way of funding the PRU, incentivising schools to take up engagement places, developing outreach support and asking secondary colleagues to reinvest up to half the funding previously transferred to the High Needs budget into vocational places at the PRU. A report will be provided to School Forum in March on the outcome of the HASH meeting.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Through supporting schools to become more inclusive, streamlining the assessment arrangements and revising the offer of our specialist provision, including the PRU, it is hoped that we will be better able to meet the needs of Halton pupils through our local provision. Providing support from specialist settings to mainstream schools should ensure more children and young people can be educated within their local mainstream school alongside their peers.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 Current provision does not meet the needs of children and young people in the Borough. High numbers of children are being educated in independent provision with many pupils having to travel outside the borough to access provision. This is not in their best interest and is not sustainable.

6.2 Ensuring mainstream schools are more inclusive will reduce the demand on specialist settings and out of borough provision. Remodelling specialist provision so that it better meets local need and special schools provide places for only the most complex children and young people with SEND, reducing the level of placements in independent provision.

6.3 The newly established Placement Division will visit all independent settings checking on the quality of provision, outcomes for the children and young people and attendance. They will also review the price ensuring each placement represents good value for money.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The aim of the task groups are to better understand High Needs in Halton so that we can improve the quality of SEND provision within the borough, the outcomes of children and young people with SEND and encourage all our schools to become more inclusive.