

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: Schools and High Needs Blocks

DATE: 20th January 2015

RECIPIENT: Schools Forum

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

1. This paper outlines the changes made to the proposals for the High Needs Block and Schools Block presented to Schools Forum 14th January 2015. This report is to be read in conjunction with the reports provided for 14th January to make decisions on the recommendations outlined previously.

2. The outstanding decisions from the Schools Forum 14th January 2015 are

Schools Block

- Approve the central expenditure elements of the Schools Block summarised in Appendix 1.
- Note the transfer of £1,808,300* of funding between the Schools and High Needs Block for 2015/16.

*Updated as per this briefing report

3. This paper details three options to release resources from the Schools Block to fund the pressure within the High Needs Block. These options are for presented for consultation with the Schools Forum.

4. This briefing provides updates to specific queries raised at School's Forum held 14th January 2015.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

5. High Needs Block

Subsequent to the meeting held 14th January 2015 an error in the number of maintained Special School places was identified. The number of places programmed for Great Oaks should have been 170 by September 2015 and not the 162 originally provided for calculation. This has created a further pressure of £90,500 increasing the forecast spend on High Needs to £19,788,200 and the overall pressure to £2,049,200. In turn this will require a corresponding increase in the level of transfer from the Schools Block by £90,500.

6. Appendix 2 shows the breakdown of the High Needs Block and highlights the changes since Schools Forum 14th January 2015.

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7. Schools Block

Prior to the Schools Forum 14th January 2015 an error in the way that Mobility was calculated and subsequently used to distribute budget shares to Schools was identified. A verbal update was provided at the meeting. The impact of this change on the Schools Block is highlighted in Appendix 1.

8. The mobility factor in the allocation tool provided by the DfE was in error for some schools where the school had changed, e.g. merged or had become a sponsored academy. The impact of correcting this anomaly was a reduction of £731,300 of unnecessary mobility funding from five schools thereby increasing the Headroom.
9. The de-delegation of the Intervention Fund, (Support for School in financial Difficulties) was not agreed, 14th January 2015. Appendix 3 shows a breakdown of the spend for 2013/14, (as per the report presented to Schools Forum 25th June 2014) and the current spend and known commitments for 2014/15.

Schools Forum need to decide whether to de-delegate this budget for 2015/16. Primary and Secondary Members will need to decide separately for their phase. Based on the number of pupils the proposed amount per phase is outlined in the table below.

| | NOR | Amount |
|------------------|------------|---------------|
| Primary | 12967 | £216,550 |
| Secondary | 6648 | £111,020 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | £327,570 |

It is proposed that should the de-delegation of an Intervention Fund be agreed for 2015/16 that the Principal Officer for Education and Early Years or his delegate provide a paper to the next Schools Forum proposing a set of criteria for which bids can be assessed against during 2015/16.

10. The proposal to amend the rate for the Primary Growth Fund to £26,600 was not agreed 14th January 2015. Should the Schools Forum decide to retain the current rate of £33,400 for 2015/16 this will create a further pressure of £183,600 within the Schools Block from the position reported 14th January 2015. This has been included within Appendix 1 that outlines the impact of changes on the Schools Block since 14th January 2015.

It is suggested that a future rate for the Primary Growth Fund could be based on the same parameters as those agreed 10th July 2013 except for using a higher grade Teacher SCP. E.g. using the equivalent of Mainscale 3 would generate an annual allocation per additional classroom of £29,300.

It is proposed that the Finance Manager for People Directorate bring a paper to the next Schools Forum proposing a new rate for the Primary Growth Fund to start with effect from April 2016.

11. The impact of all of the changes highlighted above to both the Schools and High Needs Blocks since 14th January 2015 are included within Appendices 1 and 2.

After Calculating the 2015/16 budget share at 2014/15 funding levels there is now £1,164,100 of "headroom" in the Individual Schools budget. Of the £1,808,300 to be transferred to High Needs £1,164,100 will come from the Headroom. The remaining £644,200 will need to be found by reducing the remaining Schools Block.

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12. Three options have been modelled to reduce the Schools Block. The impact of each of these options, on a school by school basis is included at Appendix 4.

These options are outlined below:

| Option | Option Description |
|----------|--|
| Option 1 | Reduces AWPU by further £95.02 and scales all gains back by 100% |
| Option 2 | Reduces Fixed Lump Sum by £34,770 with no changes to AWPU and scales all gains back by 100% |
| Option 3 | Reduces Lump Sum by £17,000 (50% of Option 2) with balance coming from AWPU (£48.15) and scales all gains back by 100% |

These options are for consultation with the School Forum. The preferred option is Option 1 as this reduces Schools budgets proportionately in line with pupil numbers.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

Appendix 1 Schools Block

Appendix 2 Estimated High Needs Block 2015/16

Appendix 3 Use of Intervention Fund 2013/14 & 2014/15 to date

Appendix 4 Impact on Schools funding for each option to reduce the Schools Block

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