

29 April 2015

AGENDA ITEM

6

HIGH NEEDS BUDGET 2015-16

Report of the Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose

1.1 To update the Forum on the elements of the High Level Needs Budget.

2. Summary

2.1 This paper gives details of the High Needs budget for 2015-16, including a comparison with the 2014-15 High Needs Budget figures, which were presented to the Forum in April 2014.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Forum is asked to consider the elements of the High Needs Budget.

4. High Needs Budget

The attached annexes set out:

Annex 1: High Needs Budget for 2015-16, including a comparison with 2014-15.

Annex 2: Description of the elements of the high needs Budget.

5. Commentary

5.1 Overall the High Needs budget has increased by £1.3m between 2014-15 and 2015-16. The main reasons for this change are as follows:

- i) Removal of the two elements of the budget being supported by specific one off carry forwards in 2014-15, which were:
 - £0.8m transitional funding for Learning Support Units,
 - £0.3m to support the DSPL budget for special schools.

(An additional £0.7m to support the Exceptional Needs budget in 2014-15 was agreed in year and is not shown in the 2014-15 budget figures.)

- ii) Funding of £1.6m for inflation in pay and prices and the increase in teachers pensions, which has resulted in increases across the high needs budget.
- iii) Funding of £0.8m for specific pressures in special school top ups due to increases in the number and needs of pupils and the impact of formula changes on MFG protection.

5.2 Looking at the changes in individual elements of the budget, the largest increase is in the budget for special school top ups. This is largely caused by the pressures outlined above, including the fact that the inflation on place funding has to be allocated through the top ups, because place funding is fixed by the DfE at £10,000 per place. Additionally the changes in residential funding have resulted in a switch of an element of residential funding into the main top ups, to fund Engagement Support Workers in BESD schools. Finally there has been the delegation through the top ups of the remainder of the revenue budget for capital maintenance of £0.1m and a minor switch of resource from place funding to top ups due to the standardisation of post 16 place funding at £10k per place.

5.3 The place funding for Education Support Centres (ESCs) and Roman Fields has increased from £8,000 to £10,000 per place from September 2015, as required by the DfE. This has been funded via a switch in resources from the commissioned services allocations that ESCs and Roman Fields receive.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The High Needs sub group of the Forum will be considering the High Needs budget at its next meeting.

6.2 The group has previously identified the need to plan early for any changes to high needs' provision in 2016-17. This is necessary in order to feed into DfE processes (for example in respect of changes to high needs' place numbers), which have in recent years required submission of data in the Autumn Term. It is expected therefore that any proposed changes will be brought to the Forum at the latest by the October meeting.