

**MINUTES**  
**School Forum High Needs Funding Sub-group Meeting**  
**Thursday 7 September 2017**  
**9.30 – 11.30**  
**Mimram Bar, County Hall**

Present: Debbie Orton (DO), Simon Newland (SN), Jonathan Burberry (JB), Yvonne Medlam (YM), Sara Lalis (SL), Jennie Newman (JN), Richard Haynes (RH), Tony Fitzpatrick (TF), Jan Liversage (JL), Karen James (KJ), Rik Boxer (RB), Consultant

Item	Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome and apologies</b>            Apologies were received from Zoe Hancock</p>
2.	<p><b>Bushey Meads PNI Base</b></p> <p>A review of the base was carried out earlier this year as part of the Sensory and Physical workstream. The base was established many years ago with the original intention that pupils from the local primary PNI special school (Meadow Wood) would transfer there at secondary level. However pupils from Meadow Wood generally transfer to an SLD school for secondary phase.</p> <p>There are 14 pupils currently with the Bushey Meads base named as their provision on an EHCP. These pupils are in effect supported in mainstream classes. There are no specialist PNI teachers at Bushey Meads and specialist advice is provided by the County advisory service. £337k is allocated to the school to meet the pupils' needs therefore the cost of each place is higher than the cost of a special school place. The budget however is currently overspending. The review concluded that the pupils in other areas with similar needs to those at the base would be supported in their local mainstream schools with ENF if required.</p> <p>Three options were considered by the SEND Exec in the Summer Term – (i) no change (ii) decommission or (iii) refocus the provision to provide for a higher level of complexity of need. Options 1 and 3 were not considered appropriate and the SEND Exec tasked officers to investigate further the implications of decommissioning. The contract with Bushey Meads runs until 2023 but can be terminated with a year's notice. A detailed paper outlining the implications of decommissioning will be considered by the SEND Exec on 26 September.</p> <p>YM presented a proposed model of tapering the funding over time as pupil numbers decreased. Existing pupils at the provision would be supported there as long as this remained parental preference. This is in line with arrangements that have been put in place for other decommissions (eg the SpLD and VI bases at Barnwell School).</p> <p>The HN group considered the model to be appropriate. It was noted that if there was a recommendation to decommission then a formal consultation process would be likely to be needed.</p>

Item	Action	Action
	<p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools Forum to be appraised on 20 September (through these minutes)</li> <li>Paper to SEND Exec with detailed implications on 26 September</li> </ul>	<p><b>Debbie Orton</b></p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Speech and Language Contract</b></p> <p>Work is progressing to recommission SALT services through an integrated contract between HCC and the two CCGs from April 2018. Rik Boxer presented a paper that outlined the earlier agreement of School Forum to this approach, with some provisos. The current contracts in total amount to over £5m including £1.7m of HLN DSG. It was confirmed that DSG funding in an integrated contract would need to be separately accounted for.</p> <p>It was also noted that a 5% saving had been suggested but there was concern from HLN group this had not been the intention at the outset. Savings had not been agreed by Forum and the HLN group felt that it would be preferable to look at reinvestment from any efficiencies rather than a reduced service.</p> <p>Heads are invited to a focus group in October to provide their views on the specification (invitation sent to Chairs of the HT Forums at the end of Summer Term) and it was felt important that heads have a strong input. There is still time to influence what the spec looks like. KJ emphasised the importance of having early years and nursery heads perspectives so need to make sure they are invited.</p> <p>There were a number of principles which Heads felt needed to be reflected in the commissioning process, which might perhaps also be discussed further at and focus groups. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the need for transparency round the purposes for which DSG funding was used, so as to demonstrate that its use supported educational objective/met educational needs</li> <li>the need for school-level engagement with the service round the day-to-day work of therapists, and so far as possible an ability of Heads in part to direct and prioritise work</li> <li>feedback on performance to Heads collectively and to Forum as the funding body</li> <li>attention to key qualitative issues, such as the need to reduce the current high level of change of therapists at school level.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RB to amend paper in light of some comments today and it will be presented at School Forum on 20 Sept.</li> <li>DO to send reminder to Chairs of HT Forums re focus group and ask for nursery head rep to be invited</li> <li>Schools Forum to be asked to endorse the principles set out above</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rik Boxer</b></p> <p><b>Debbie Orton</b></p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Special school, unit and college placements 2018-19</b></p>	

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	<p>HLN group was advised that there is a Special School Task group meeting on 3 October to look at the place planning for 2018-19. YM circulated the current position for information. JB explained that at the Sept Forum meeting a preliminary budget paper would be presented and there is a need to include an indicative figure for increase in HLN places if that's what's needed. This would include the 8 additional places at 3 schools (total 24) where capital projects are agreed. (Breakspeare, Woodfield and Haywood Grove).</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YM to include the increased numbers (24) in indicative increases.</li> </ul> <p>The HLN group were concerned to hear of an example of a special school in Hertfordshire where places commissioned and funded by HCC were filled disproportionately by pupils from another LA, who pay the top up only. This is exacerbated if the school more readily accepts pupils from another LA because that LA funds a higher top up rate to secure the placement. This practice has the effect of Herts pupils with complex needs not having their needs met in a local school which is funded for that purpose and has consequences for other Herts schools, Herts pupils and their families and HCC.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SN to raise with Jenny Coles</li> </ul>	<p><b>Yvonne Medlam</b></p> <p><b>Simon Newland</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Out County Split of Costs</b></p> <p>SN explained that it is 4 years since the split of funding between Education, Social Care and Health was reviewed for independent placements with a residential component. There are some inconsistencies and it is suggested that a review be carried out and the outcomes would be followed through to the November Forum meeting for a budgeting decision.</p> <p>JB highlighted that the independent and non-maintained budget was indicating an overspend (£400k) and a pressure may need to be included for the 2018/19 budget.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review outcomes to be considered by HLN group once completed</li> </ul>	<p><b>Simon Newland</b></p>
6.	<p><b>Cost Pressures 2018-19</b></p> <p>The group discussed the extent to which we should fund cost pressures across HLN block or part of HLN. SN said assumption is that ½ % will be added to HLN block DSG funding for next year. RH stated that there should be a targeted approach with an analysis of where there are pressures.</p> <p>KJ stated that the Early Years group had discovered that the Ludwick Enrichment group could not be funded from EY funding as this could only</p>	

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	<p>be used equitably 'across the board'. She thought this was in a recent DfE paper. JB/YM were not aware of this. There would therefore be a need to consider whether the provision should be funded from HLN.</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melany McQueen to clarify with JB/YM</li> <li>• No recommendation at this stage re targeting cost pressures as further work to do to identify the need</li> </ul>	<p><b>Melany McQueen</b></p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b>Update on Current Capital Projects</b></p> <p>There are a number of capital projects being progressed using revenue as agreed by Forum and DfE – improvements at Breakespeare and Watling View and increased capacity of 8 places at each of Breakespeare (on site of Meadow Wood); Woodfield and Haywood Grove. Public consultations re the increases have to take place because of the numbers involved and these are underway.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p><b>Initial priorities for DfE HLN Capital Funding 2018 -19</b></p> <p>The DfE is making capital funding available to all LAs for SEND provision. Herts will receive £6m in 3 allocations (it is not clear whether funding can be carried forward). The LA has to draw up a plan, consult with stakeholders and publish the plan. There were a number of suggestions and requests for allocations already being made. There was clearly a tension between wishing to proceed with projects that were ready to go, as against the need to take an over-view of all priorities and the (DfE requirement) for a plan which contained all of the projects which it was intended to fund from the capital allocation.</p> <p>It was agreed that individual projects needed to fit with a set of agreed priorities and not allocate ad hoc.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To present outline of areas of priority to the SEND Exec on 26 September so that it would be easier to agree or not individual projects coming forward</li> <li>• To prepare a report outlining initial priorities to the November Forum</li> </ul>	<p><b>Debbie Orton</b></p> <p><b>Debbie Orton</b></p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><b>SEND Development Fund</b></p> <p>Three areas had been identified and funding allocated – (i) special school complexity of need,(ii) primary and secondary behaviour and (iii) support services for complex/low incidence needs</p> <p>Special School complexity – work has been carried out to adjust the banding profiles for sp school sectors based on initial hypothesis of where additional funding should be allocated. The intention was to respond to increased complexity in special schools and reflect this in the higher</p>	

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<p>bands. It had been thought that secondary LD schools were a particular case. However financial audits carried out so far in a small number of schools had found that the perceived budgetary pressures could be addressed by reprioritisation and efficiency within the existing budgets or, in one school, the scale of difficulty was not as described. Further work of this type is needed to ensure formula funding is allocated where it is needed. The intention is to be able to implement any appropriate changes ready for April 2018.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simon to clarify capacity and timescale for further audit work (SN)</li> </ul> <p>Behaviour – there is an agreement to allocate the parked primary funding to local areas once they have agreed the specification and can meet the requirements. A number of areas have developed plans based on decommissioning current provision and establishing a new model. Some areas are looking at provision which may involve capital costs. A potential source is the new DfE capital if, as referred to in point 7 above, these projects are agreed to fit within the priorities.</p> <p>Note : Secondary behaviour and AP funding was not discussed but a meeting is being arranged in the first half of the Autumn term with a secondary HT invited from each DSPL Area to discuss and agree commissioning and funding arrangements.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To determine requirements for distributing the designated parked funding to areas for primary provision in April 2018</li> </ul> <p>Support Services – There are a number of changes underway or completed including a major reorganisation of ISL services. Now this has been carried out a proposal to identify where additional specialist advice and support for complex needs is required will be drawn up.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proposal will be made to Send Exec in November</li> </ul>	<p><b>Simon Newland</b></p> <p><b>Debbie Orton &amp; Behaviour workstream reps</b></p> <p><b>Debbie Orton</b></p>	<p><b>Simon Newland</b></p> <p><b>Debbie Orton &amp; Behaviour workstream reps</b></p> <p><b>Debbie Orton</b></p>
<p>10. <b>Refresh of SEND Strategy and priorities for 2018-2019</b></p> <p>The SEND strategy will need to be refreshed next year. The suggested priorities for 2018-19 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The special school strategy and complex needs</li> <li>- SLCN bases/units</li> <li>- Behaviour, including AP and SEMH schools</li> <li>- Support services</li> </ul> <p>Although Hertfordshire has had an underspend in the HLN block there is increasing pressure on the system – rising requests for EHC assessments, more EHCPs, pressure on special school places as a result, a large increase in secondary Perm Exclusions, a rise in numbers and spend on specialist placements out of county.</p>		

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	<p><b>Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debbie to propose refresh of strategy with agreed priorities to SEND Exec on 26 September</li> </ul>
	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SL asked what happens to the AWPU when pupils are excluded and could funding be provided to ESCs to support the individual. JB explained the income is part of the overall HLN budget and it would be better to address this as part of the ESC funding arrangements.</li> <li>• SL raised the issue about the cost of the service currently supplying tutors for interim alternative provision and whether there was a more cost effective way to meet the needs. DO said that it would be hoped that the needs could be provided for through the commissioned behaviour services in each area, which includes a requirement to provide for pupils out of school or excluded, so as to not have to have pupils receiving tuition which is separate from a school/setting.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Next meeting</b>            Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017            9.30 – 11.30            Room NBG.3, County Hall</p>