

TO: SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE: 19 OCTOBER 2017

**UPDATE TO THE SCHOOLS FORUM REGARDING
THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING REVIEW
Director, Children Young People and Learning**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The High Needs Block review action plan was presented at Schools Forum on 13th July 2017.
- 1.2 The Schools Forum requested a regular update on the progress of implementing the High Needs Block recommendations.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The High Needs Block review was commissioned and completed in the last academic year. Four overarching recommendations were made and these were agreed in principle by the Council Corporate Management Team.
- 2.2 The key purpose of the review was to identify if the funding is being used appropriately, efficiencies that can be made to meet any potential reductions in funding and to re-invest in a new and improved Special Educational Needs system.
- 2.3 An action plan has been developed to implement these recommendations and this has been shared with School Forum for their information.
- 2.4 Local authorities should use their high needs budget to provide the most appropriate support package for an individual with SEND in a range of settings, taking account of parental and student choice, whilst avoiding perverse incentives to over-identify high needs pupils and students. High needs funding is also intended to support good quality alternative provision for pupils who cannot receive their education in schools.
- 2.5 As a function of making changes to the SEND system it is vital that this is undertaken collaboratively with schools, parents and young people. This partnership approach continues to develop with establishment of a multi-agency partnership improvement board that includes representation from schools, health, social care, parents/ carers and young people.
- 2.6 This action plan relates directly to the recommendations within the High Needs Block review. Whilst these are a key focus many form part of the wider transformation agenda for the Council.
- 2.7 The action plan and the key actions relate to deficits within the current system. It is important to remember that there are many positives within the current system as highlighted in the report and the current partnership Self Evaluation Form.
- 2.8 Key actions since last report on 13th July 2017:
 - SEN strategy group established and meeting regularly with representation from each phase of education.

- Rainbow resource relocation has been completed.
- Agreement with Ranelagh and Education and Skills Funding Agency reached regarding the resource unit resulting in recoupment of £132k,
- SEND strategy co-produced with partners, parents, young people and now being consulted upon,
- Partnership SEF completed with respect to implementation of the Code of Practice and inspection preparation.
- Greater Head teacher engagement in the SEN panel for Education, Health Care plan decisions.

3 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 Not applicable at this point, but may be appropriate alongside the consultation process to address certain recommendations particularly where that results in changes to provision.

4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 Potential financial risks are being mitigated through conducting this review and implementing actions. There is a risk of reputational damage by making changes to the way SEN funding is being used and this is being mitigated through extensive stakeholder involvement and a communication strategy which will highlight improvements in value for money and services better matched to local needs.

Additional Papers

High Needs Block review action plan

Contacts for further information

Ian Dixon Head of Targeted Services
01344 354194 Ian.Dixon@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Frank Glennon Head of SEN and PEP
01344 354198 Frank.Glennon@bracknell-forest.gov.uk