

## Appendix 1

### Schools Forum Sub-Group (High Needs Block Sub-Committee)

#### Recommended Terms of Reference

#### Purpose

In Bracknell Forest, the High Needs Block has a significant funding gap. If current demand for SEND provision continues to increase and resources remain in line with predictions, this overspend is forecast to amount to around £4.5m per annum.

The role of the Schools Forum Sub-Group is to work in partnership with the local authority to ensure appropriate steps are taken to address the financial position in this respect. The focus of work for this authority, and for Schools' Forum is to reduce this funding gap as much as possible, without compromising outcomes for children and young people with SEND. This will mean work is focussed on improving and increasing provision within Bracknell Forest settings so that local provision is the first choice for children, young people and their families.

#### Terms of Reference

##### 1. Responsibilities

The Schools Forum Sub-Group (High Needs Block Sub-Committee) will:

- a) Review the financial impact of existing national SEND policy locally.
- b) Review and monitor the use of High Needs Funding to ensure that funding is allocated appropriately to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- c) Identify savings and pressures on the High Needs Block including and areas where immediate savings can be made
- d) Review and prioritise proposed work programmes from BFC focusing on priority areas and arising issues (as agreed by Schools Forum).
- e) Provide regular updates to Schools Forum, offering advice and recommendations to the Schools Forum regarding the use of High Needs Funding (through clear reporting) so that:
  - i. There is ongoing cognisance of issues related to the High Needs Block; and
  - ii. Schools Forum members have greater opportunity to take a proactive role in High Needs Budget decision-making, thereby improving transparency.
- f) Review and make recommendations to Schools Forum on directing the allocation of High Needs Funding in relation to:
  - i. Top-up rates, number of places and other specific financial pressures or issues identified by the subcommittee.
  - ii. The wider strategic agenda which underpins Bracknell Forest's approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND set out within the Bracknell Forest SEND Commissioning Plan (2020 – 2022).

(See Appendix 1)

##### 2. Membership

- a. Schools Forum representative members: this would be open membership, including the Headteacher of Kennel Lane and the Headteacher of the PRS as associate members
- b. Corporate Finance Team representative
- c. SEND Service manager representative
- d. Commissioning representative

Please note:

- These representatives would each in turn be able to delegate attendance to a representative should they be unable to attend.
- It is open to a Schools Forum to set up 'Task & Finish' working groups of members to discuss specific issues, and to produce draft advice and decisions for the Schools Forum itself to consider.
- In order to meet these responsibilities, the authority need to ensure the group have access to good quality, up-to date data.

### **3. Chair**

High Needs Block subcommittee member voted by head teachers and school governors on the Schools Forum.

### **4. Frequency**

The Sub-Committee will meet on a half termly basis as a minimum and with extra-ordinary meetings as required.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **From Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Guidance:**

1. It's open to a Schools Forum to set up working groups of members to discuss specific issues, and to produce draft advice and decisions for the Schools Forum itself to consider.
  2. The groups can also include wider representation, for example, an early years reference group can represent all the different types of provider to consider the detail of the early years single funding formula.
  3. The reference group would then be able to give its considered view on the local authority's proposals to the schools forum.
  4. The schools forum should not delegate actual decisions or the finalisation of advice to a working group, as this may have the effect of excluding legitimate points of view. These have proved effective for larger local authorities; examples of some working groups are for high needs and early years.<sup>1</sup>
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## **Appendix 2**

### **Proposed Work Plan:**

1. Work with LA officers as the link with Headteachers to implement the SEND Improvement Strategy; in particular, working with LA officers on the most immediate priorities:
  - a. Engage with Headteachers across the borough to identify measures to identify potential cost pressure avoidance
  - b. Work together to model and test proposed options for the revised funding matrix. (Options will be provided by LA officers)
  - c. Identify where capacity can be maximised to reduce the numbers of children being educated out of borough
  - d. Explore alternative ways of working to improve efficient use of resources, both in borough and out of borough.

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<sup>1</sup> *Schools Forum: Operational and Good Practice Guidance*. Educational and Skills Funding Agency. Sept.'18