**SCHOOLS FORUM – 17TH MARCH 2015**

**SEN UPDATE – HIGH NEEDS BLOCK ALLOCATION 2015-16**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to advise Schools Forum members of the proposed allocation of the High Needs Block (HNB) for 2015-16 and seek any comments they may have.

**Background**

The 2015-16 indicative High Needs Block allocation issued by the DfE shows an indicative allocation to NELC of £15.919 which is an increase of £0.138M on the 2014-15 allocation.

The proposed allocation of spend of the HNB for 2015-16 represents a further refinement of spending since the first SEN Financial Plan was presented to Schools Forum in 2012-13. Since this time changes have been made in line with national changes to the funding of High Needs, revised operational models, changes in demand, a re-negotiation of SEN contracts such as Outreach and Physical Difficulties and a refinement of spending patterns.

Members are also requested to bear in mind that the current allocation is financial year based whereas funding for some of the establishments, special academies, PRU’s are academic year based.

Members are further requested to note that in respect of our special academies final admission numbers will not be known until the summer and therefore the final value of top up funding cannot be precisely estimated at this time.

**Summary of the Main changes**

The attached Appendix 1 shows the proposed allocation for 2015-16. As stated above refinement has taken place and where for example costs have been moved between headings the comparator has also been restated.

The main changes are detailed below:

* PRU’s now show their top up funding only following their conversion to academy status
* Budgets have been rebased in the service areas of Statements, HI/VI and Home Tuition following a review of the original budget set.
* A budget has been built in for a proposed resource based provision at Eastfield.
* A budget for Early Years SEN has been built in for £75,000 and an allowance has been made for an expect increase in 2016-17 in this area of £75,000.
* A demand provision has been created to allow a cushion in respect of demand increases. This equates to 0.7%.
* Inflation has been awarded on a number of budget heads which haven’t been rebased or newly created. The amount of inflation has been set at 1.5% and equates to the additional HNB allocation received.

**Further detail**

**Statements**

The forecast for next year has been reviewed and is based on the number of pupils that will remain in mainstream school and the known leavers. This will cost in the region of £460k. A further £130k is required for new pupils based on trend in the current financial year.

**Proposed provision at Eastfield**

A 6 place provision is proposed to be created at the above school to provide a service for those pupils with Social Emotional and Mental health needs (SEMH). The provision will be similar to the Western primary resourced based provision. The creation of this facility will not increase numbers available but will extend the choice available.

**Early Years SEN**

During our review of the Early Years hourly rates it became apparent that the treatment of SEN for Early Years pupils was inconsistent and as such this needed to be addressed. The area of inconsistency was generally between not within setting. As such an initial provision based on intelligence existing at the current time of £75k is projected which is anticipated to increase to £150k in the second year. The plan submitted today allows for that increase.

**Demand Provision**

It has been decided to create a very small provision in the event that demand estimates exceed current inbuilt assumptions. Areas where this could apply to are the final top up position in respect of the special academies or the request made to the DfE by the PRU provider to request an increase in place numbers or to fund those smaller number of children who return to the area who require education but are not on the roll of a school.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that Schools forum note the report.

Contact Officer: David Kirven - Service Finance Manager – Partnering