

Report to the Schools Forum 17 January 2019

T&W 2019/20 High Needs Budget

2019/20 Funding

- 1.1 On 18 December 2018, the DfE released details of the high needs funding allocations to local authorities in 2019/20. T&W's 2019/20 allocation compared to 2018/19 is as follows:

	2018/19	2019/20	Increase
High Needs DSG	£21.642m	£22.203m	£0.561m

- 1.2 The increase of £0.561m arises from:

- around £0.3m representing the provisional increase in the high needs block allocation announced by the DfE in July 2018;

- £0.25m representing the inclusion of Queensway North as a special school, leading to its pupils attracting funding of £4,000 per pupil to T&W's high needs allocation. Until recently, Queensway North had been treated as a 36 place unit attached to HLC. As a result any pupils over 36 had been included in HLC funding and the schools block funding for these pupils had offset high needs costs. Thus whilst there is now additional high needs funding for Queensway North, from September 2019 there will no longer be any funding in the schools block which can be used to offset high needs costs.

- 1.3 Incorporated in each of the two years figures above is T&W's share of the additional £250m revenue funding for high needs announced by the Government on 16 December, which was as follows:

2018/19	£418,170
2019/20	£418,170

- 1.4 This additional funding had not been previously intimated by the DfE. It represents a tacit acknowledgement of the pressures that have been building nationally in high needs and which have been experienced locally in T&W as previously discussed. The 2018/19 allocation may enable T&W to reduce the DSG deficit of £544,000 brought forward from 2017/18.

- 1.5 At the November meeting of the Schools Forum, it was agreed to transfer 0.5% of the schools block, amounting to £586,000 in 2019/20, to support high needs. The following budget proposals are based on a high needs budget that includes this transferred sum.

2019/20 Budget Proposals

- 1.6 During discussions with the Forum and through other consultations and meetings, it is clear that mainstream schools feel strongly that resourcing high needs is becoming increasingly challenging. At the same time, T&W's strategy is develop the resilience of mainstream schools to meet increasing complexity of needs when this is possible and is in the best interests of the pupil. One of the problems arising from the budgetary

pressures experienced in high needs in recent years has been that the resources to implement this strategy have been squeezed.

- 1.7 T&W therefore proposes to focus the additional funding on building capacity in mainstream schools, as follows:

Proposal	Allocation
Reintroduce the SEN contingency fund	£100,000
Introduce two 8 place (total of 16 places) resourced provisions from September 2019	£150,000
Increase funding paid to mainstream schools via the Inclusion Panel	£50,000
Outreach support	£100,000
Training for mainstream school staff	£50,000
Total	£450,000

- 1.8 Each of these proposals is outlined in more detail below.

Reintroduce the SEN contingency fund £100,000

- 1.9 This fund was removed in 2018/19 in order to achieve a short-term, deliverable saving. The fund is designed to provide additional funding to schools in which the amount of not directly funded EHCP hours (i.e. the first 15) in a school are significantly higher than the school's demographics (number of pupils, deprivation and low prior attainment) would predict.

- 1.10 This is achieved by ranking schools for the levels of both deprivation and low prior attainment in the school, combining these to provide an overall ranking and then comparing this to the rank for the first 15 EHCP hours. Funds are allocated where the demographic ranking is significantly less than the EHCP ranking. Funds are distributed based on two points of measurement, the EHCP hours in the school as at April (5/12 of the funds) and as at September (7/12 of the funds).

Introduce two 8 place (total of 16 places) resourced provisions from September 2019 £150,000

- 1.11 As previously discussed with the Forum and as part of the consultation on high needs provision in T&W undertaken in 2018, it was proposed to create resourced provisions, linked to mainstream schools. Development of resource bases provides a more inclusive solution to meeting more complex needs, delivers greater choice for parents and supports capacity building in mainstream settings.

- 1.12 It is anticipated that two provisions will be open by September 2019.

Increase the rates paid to mainstream schools for support through the Inclusion Panel £50,000

- 1.13 The inclusion panel was established in January 2018. It meets and provides a route to allocate additional resources to schools to support high needs for individual pupils without needing to obtain an EHCP first. It thus facilitates earlier intervention and enables additional resources to be provided without going through a statutory assessment. In the 9 months to 31 December 2018, £34,000 had been allocated through the fund. This proposal will allow alignment of top up rates used for children with EHC plans to funding allocated through the Inclusive School Fund.
- 1.14 There will be further exploration of applying 1 resource allocation system to all children with EHC plans based on the banded funding system that is about to be used to allocate funding to special schools. If adopted this has the potential to deliver a consistent system that allocates funding based on the presenting need of a child as opposed to what setting they attend. Implementation of this approach will need careful consideration following initial modelling of costs.

Outreach Support £100,000

- 1.15 Outreach support used to be available to mainstream schools, from special school staff, until this support ceased several years ago. It is proposed to reintroduce such support during 2019/20. Discussions would be held with mainstream schools and special schools to agree upon the most useful way of delivering this, but the sum proposed would fund cover for approximately 2 FTE teaching staff from special schools (the actual support would be likely to involve more than two people but this is the FTE equivalent).

Training for mainstream school staff £50,000

- 1.16 In addition to support from within T&W, provided through outreach, it is intended to provide funding for mainstream school staff to attend external training on support for high needs pupils. As an example this could include Level 2 Autism Education Training which was about to be rolled out to schools as a traded offer within the local area.
- 1.17 Overall these proposals are intended to increase the resilience of mainstream schools to meet increasing complexity of need. They are also intended to ensure that mainstream schools that have a particularly high level of high needs in their schools are able to access support, both financially and through access to support and training, so that their overall provision is not impacted upon, compared to schools with lower levels of high needs.

Tim Davis
Group Accountant
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