Report of the Borough Treasurer

Item 6– High Needs Contingency

Schools Forum

19th June 2013
1. **Purpose of the Paper**

The purpose of this report is to notify Schools Forum members of the purpose and criteria for accessing a High Needs Contingency fund in 2013-14.

2. **Background**

Since April 2010 Oldham Schools have received delegated funding equivalent to the first 15 hours of additional provision for pupils with high needs. Under the new funding formula for 2013-14, high needs funding is support needed above the first £6,000 the school should provide from their SEN budget which equates to 9.5 hours.

Schools were able to apply for contingency SEND funding where additional high needs pupils arrived in the school or there was a significant change for an existing pupil. In all other circumstances schools were expected to prioritise the totality of their SEN resources to ensure that provision can be appropriately offered that is additional to and different from the quality first teaching offer for all pupils.

The application process required schools to evidence the following:

- There was evidence that the pupil has needs that are severe and complex
- The school has assigned the totality of their SEN/AEN budget to provide additional resources for pupils with special and additional needs
- There was clear information regarding the anticipated outcomes of the additional provision

The decision on whether or not additional funding should be made available was made by the Special Educational Needs and Disability panel. The panel comprised senior LA officers, representatives from health and social care and school representatives.

The new reforms recognise that where the new formula allocation to schools and academies does not adequately reflect high levels of high needs pupils that additional funding can be targeted at these schools.

3. **Revisions**

1. A contingency fund of £289,166 has been set up in 2013-14 to enable schools to make a Business Case where the new funding arrangements for SEN do not adequately reflect high levels of high needs pupils and have led to difficulties for the school in being able to afford the appropriate provision for SEN pupils.

2. It is proposed the fund is managed as follows:
   - All schools are notified of the existence of the fund
Schools are notified that decisions regarding any allocations will be based on the following criteria:

a. School Balances less than 3% @31-3-2013. For academies the balance should be the balance reported and verified 31st August 2012.

b. The school has more than the average for the sector number of Statements.

c. Number of non statemented pupils e.g. School Action Plus. There will be scrutiny of School Action Plus designations by the authority; i.e. has there been external agency work with the school or pupil.

d. Comparison of funding allocated to what is needed. Is the school requesting what is deemed good practice?

e. Amount of Minimum Funding Guarantee received by the school in 2013-14 and amount of notional SEN received.

3. Schools who feel they meet the criteria should submit a Business Case with evidence of why they meet the criteria and how much funding is required to the Local Authority

4. Applications will reviewed each half term by:

   Associate Assistant Director Learning and Attainment
   Head of Access
   Finance Representative

5. Schools will receive a letter informing them of the decision of their application and a report will be taken to the next Schools Forum meeting on the applications received, decisions made, basis for the decision and the amount of funding allocated.

6. Schools will be allocated funding based on further modelling by Finance.

4. Actions/Recommendations

The school forum members are asked to approve the criteria for accessing High Needs Contingency.