Report of the Interim AED Learning and Attainment

Item 3 – New Special School

Schools Forum

18th June 2014
1. Purpose of the Paper
The purpose of this report is to

Provide a short briefing note on the New Special School

2. Background

The Council has been successful with a bid to build a new 140 place Special School for children across the borough. The funding secured of £6.25m will be received from the Targeted Basic Need Programme.

The annual revenue funding for the new school will need to be provided from the Council's current DSG allocation and, if approved an increase in the Council’s high needs funding allocation given by the Education Funding Authority (EFA).

The new facility will provide specialised education provision for children aged 4-19 with autism and associated communication disorders, who could be high achievers given the right support.

The school is expected to open in late 2015 and New Bridge School, through their multi academy trust, was chosen to sponsor the new school.

3. EFA Additional High Needs Funding

Based on guidance issued by the EFA for 2014-15 it is expected generally that all Local Authorities will operate on the basis that overall numbers of high needs places will not increase and thus overall high needs revenue funding will not increase. Any additional high needs funding approved for Oldham will have to be funded by reduced place numbers within other Local Authorities or a transfer of funding at a national level from the DSG Early Years or Schools funding blocks to the DSG High Needs funding block.

Despite the creation of an additional 140 places through the new special school, there is no guaranteed growth in the DSG High Needs allocations given to the Council.

The Council will need to submit details of the additional places created by the new special school to the EFA by December 2014, supplemented by a business case. Before a business case to increase the funding allocation is considered by the EFA, the Council must demonstrate that it has considered the use of its existing high needs funding allocation.

4. Possible Funding

The new special school will need to be funded from the DSG High Needs funding block.

It is estimated that £1.1m of revenue funding can be found through the following,
Details of different funding scenarios are been worked on currently and details will be presented at a future meeting.

5. Funding Options Available

The options available to fund any gap and if approved by the EFA, supplement any additional high needs funding allocations given are

1. Transferring existing DSG allocations to the new special school
2. An additional High Needs allocation following submittal of a Business Case to the EFA
3. Top slicing individual school budgets

6. Actions/ Recommendations

Members are recommended to note the contents of this report
Note a business case will be sent to EFA in December 2014 requesting additional high needs funding for the increase in places created by this new special schools funding allocations given.
A further report will be brought to the Schools Forum once we know the outcome of the submission of the business case to EFA.