

## **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

### **WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES**

##### **High Needs Working Group – notes of meeting 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014.**

**Attending** – Richard Longster, Deborah Marchant, Phil Ward, Steve Dainty, Andrew Roberts

**Apologies** – Shirley Allen, Ken Frost, Brian Jordan

##### **1. Terms of Reference**

To review SEN funding, consider any changes that are being recommended and to advise the Schools Forum.

##### **2. The specific requirements to review SEN funding** arose from the High Needs Consultation and report to the Schools Forum in November 2013 and Cabinet in January 2014. The relevant recommendations are:

- a developmental staged approach to the high needs funding reform is accepted
- the inclusion money that all special schools receive totalling £757,874 should be subject to a proper review of what the money is for and how it is being used and with recommendations for future action.
- further changes to the continuum of provision for children with Social Communication/ Autistic Spectrum Condition ... are to be considered by the policy review that is underway.
- The SEN Forum Group lead the developments to the high needs funding bands (this would also include FE and 6<sup>th</sup> Forms).

##### **3. Membership changes**

Special Head representative – Margaret Morris

Co-opted Special Head – Andre Baird

##### **4. Leading and Managing SEN Reforms**

Discussion at Special Heads Conference 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014 re SEN reforms and the changing landscape of provision in the future. and agreed at the next sub group meeting to consider arrangements for personal budgets.

##### **5. Summary of Funding Arrangements for High Needs**

The group discussed a draft summary of the current system that will be finalised for the next meeting and then circulated to schools before the end of term.

##### **6 Inclusion Funding**

Reports to the previous Forum were referred to this group and were discussed, together with some background to the allocations

For most special schools this is an annual allocation of £33,470.

The annual activity reports present a rich mixture and a wide breadth of inclusion work. Whilst there was some discussion about officers identifying good practice there was no conclusion about further action.

This could be:

- to consider whether Special School Funding should continue to have a separate stream of inclusion funding that is audited separately to their core function or whether their core function should automatically include such activities.
- To consider if it is no longer relevant to think in the original terms of 12 teacher equivalents as the funding is embedded in school budgets and therefore it is unreasonable to expect annual reports.
- should the purpose be clarified in terms of outcomes or be separately commissioned

The views of the Forum are sought.

## 7. High Needs Places and Bandings

The group considered the initial requests for changes in places and bandings:

- **Orrets Meadow** – Additional funding for Key Stage 1 ASC provision and conversion of 8 existing places from September 2014 and a further 8 places in September 2015..  
Recommendation. That the additional places should be commissioned initially for 12 months during which time the change will be considered as part of the wider review of SEN.
- **Kilgarth and Observatory School**. There are additional pupils at the schools and more pupils with complex needs and challenging behaviours, these factors are resulting in additional financial pressures. The schools do not believe the current funding is sufficient.  
Recommendation. An initial response to deal with the short term pressures and a longer term solution to form part of a wider review.
- **Gilbrook** – Outreach work with primary schools is currently costing £175,000 but the school has funding for £150,000.  
Recommendation. The working group receive a report on the funding allocated.
- **Hayfield** - The school is expanding ASD to meet local needs and has more pupils with more challenging behaviours  
Recommendation. The funding allocation for places changed in 2014-15. No decision at this time but keep under review.
- **Stanley**. The school has requested an increase in the number of places from 90 to 100 to better reflect the current pupil number.  
Recommendation. Defer any final decision until the autumn term
- **University Academy of Birkenhead**. There are currently 16 pupils in the resource base, whilst place finding provides for 30 pupils.  
Recommendation – to reduce place numbers by a further 10 with effect from September 2015 (unless this needs to be amended by any place funding decisions by the EFA later this year.)
- **Home Tuition**. This service is managed by the headteacher of Wirral Hospitals School on behalf of the LA. There is a budget of £248,000 which provides for a growing number of children and young people. In 2013-14 the accounts recorded a spend of £293,355 as a result of

additional demands on the service. These pressures are likely to continue and may increase further as a result of Raising the Participation Age.

Recommendation. That the working group receive a report on the proposals for this service.

**Next Meeting** – July 2014 to be confirmed