# AGENDA ITEM 6

## Title of report: High Needs Update

**Author of the paper:** Kay Goodacre

**Officer to present the paper to Schools Forum:** Kay Goodacre

**Details of who has been consulted with on this paper to date:** John O’Shea

**Executive Summary:** To update on the High Needs Budget

**Details of recommendations and timescales for decisions:**

To note the report and decide on the future of a High Needs working group of the Schools Forum and propose membership

## Special School Review

We have started a review of the funding of Special Education provision, with Budget reviews and revised top ups put in place for the 2022-23 Academic year.

Special schools have not seen an increase in the top up rates in their budgets for a number of years, whilst the LA has been managing the pressure within the high needs block and special schools have been supported by significant cash reserves.

As the stability of high needs funding has been further assured, we have therefore reviewed the current costs of the special schools and recalculated top-up rates and funding to create a consistent and structured funding model across the three maintained day Special Schools in Tower Hamlets. This new funding structure can then be reviewed annually, and budget changes made in line with those of Mainstream Schools.

We will further review the residential provision at Bowden House School which had seen a review and increase in top up places more recently as well as LEAP and the mainstream resource provisions over the coming financial year (2022/23)

Meetings took place in the Autumn term between the School’s Headteachers and Finance leads and John O’Shea and Kay Goodacre from Tower Hamlets Council.

With all Special Schools we have guaranteed to fund the agreed capacity (less pupils funded by other LAs) for the full year to give stability and allow longer term planning.

Outreach allocations have been included, based on the school’s current estimation of cost, as this is a commissioned service from the LA for the school to deliver to pupils outside their own roll, there would be an expectation from the LA that there would be regular review and monitoring of the use of the provision and the LA would report back through the working group of the Schools Forum or full Forum.

## School managed High Needs Funding

Schools Forum agreed to delegate the maximum 0.5% of Schools block to support exceptional high needs at the January 2022 meeting to be allocated to Schools with higher levels of inclusivity and numbers of Children with additional needs compared with their overall funding and the amount of Notional SEN. The total amount put aside is £1.445m.

The previous working group of the school’s forum agreed an allocation based on number of Children identified with SEN against their relative amounts of notional SEN.

Consideration was also given to using this funding to support short term needs (such as trauma or other mental health issues) which have impacted upon the child’s progress and that may help settings in the short term to intervene without needing to go through the EHCP process.

Additionally, consideration was given to the needs in early years which would require further development.

## High Needs Working group

The High Needs working group was originally set up as a task and finish group, however there is an going need to continue to review the systems and allocation of support funding to Schools. Developing both the current allocations and the long-term recovery of the high needs block.

The group were unable to meet over the last term due to competing pressures with workload, the Ofsted visit and the subsequent written statement of action, which are now in place.

Therefore, we would like to reconstitute the group for the 2022-23 Financial year with termly meetings prior to the Full Schools Forum which can then report back at the next Schools Forum meeting.

Schools Forum are requested to consider the continuation of a high needs working group and membership of the future group.