

## **Appendix E: Suggestions on how the financial pressures in the high needs block can best be addressed.**

*RMBC should provide a true breakdown high needs block accounts so that we can see what the shortfall is. Also provide indicative budgets showing projections if % contributions were increased. How would this affect school budgets and High Needs Funding per pupil?*

*We will continue to work with the Borough in delivering high-needs support, as has been the case in agreeing our MLD capital build in the current financial year.*

*We would suggest more investment in pre EHCP provision for those children on the EHCP assessment pathways rather than transferring 1.5% from the Schools Block.*

*If, however, the 1.5% is taken from the high needs block to the schools block, could we use this to increase the % of Element 2 (Notional SEND budget allocation) in all schools? Alternatively use the 1.5% to increase the % of Element 2 (Notional SEND budget allocation) in for those schools that have a % of SEND that tracks significantly above national figures and has done for an agreed period of time. The % above national and length of time could be determined by Schools Forum.*

*As per Growing Schools Funding it could be that we keep the 1.5% within the Schools Block, but ring-fence it for schools to apply for additional funding to support disproportionate SEND growth. This approach would ensure that only those schools with substantial additional pressure were eligible to access the funding. This could be considered as a Graduated Response Annual Payment (GRAP) and would be limited to 3 terms, before re-application requests had to made by each school that had accessed it.*

*These options could lead to a more pro-active approach to supporting children ahead of EHCPs and could lead to fewer children requiring an EHCP assessment and therefore reduce the financial pressures on the High Needs Block, as fewer ECHPs may need issuing.*

*We would also advocate using the 1.5% towards activities that 'reduce exclusion', as this is currently both a key concern for all schools across the LA and at significant cost, particularly when pupils have to access alternative provision. The support currently in place for schools to manage pupils at risk of PX is in need of further investment and is currently not yet fit for purpose, in order to have the level of impact which would result in savings made in the long term.*

*A more joined up local/regional approach to specialist provision for high needs children, including the consideration of a more diverse specialist provision with the potential opening of LA supported specialist 'free schools'. This would hopefully*

*reduce the use of high cost third party external provisioning in the medium to long term. In addition, we need to continue to direct resources to support specialist centres/units based in schools with the ambition of supporting learners back into mainstream schooling.*

*As is being trialled – further investment in Rotherham based (funded and managed) solutions, rather than using private and beyond the LA resources at high cost. Proactive strategic planning, focusing on the projected need to ensure less reaction which usually costs .*

*Offering more places at specialist schools to release the burden and funding shortfall on mainstream and outside of authority provision.*

*Not in the short term. However, as the LA plans to do, looking at long term investment into improvements in resources locally would lead to a long term reduction in the financial pressures.*

*Capital investment to increase available places in the borough. Also, the potential to utilise mainstream schools that are significantly under capacity due to falling birth rates etc.*