

# Agenda Item 59

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Update on HNB &amp; SEND Innovation &amp; Improvement Programme</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Schools Forum on 14 July 2021
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Schools Forum is asked to:

- note the update on the SEND IIP and associated programme actions
- support the review of element 2 funding in conjunction with schools

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report provides Schools Forum with an update on the High Needs Block, SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme and associated deficit management plan.

### **Update on the High Needs Block Budget & SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme July 2021**

#### **.01 Purpose of the Report**

To provide Schools Forum with an update on the High Needs Block, SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme and deficit management plan.

#### **.02 Recommendation**

Schools Forum is asked to:

- note the update on the SEND IIP and associated programme actions,
- support the review of element 2 funding in conjunction with schools.

#### **.03 Background**

In December 2020, Schools Forum met to consider in detail the complexities and pressures facing the High Needs Block, and the programme of work underway to drive forward improvements and address the financial challenges faced.

At the time of budget setting in March 2021, initial projections indicated a £2.5m shortfall on High Needs Block resources for the 2021/22 financial year, with latest figures remaining in line with that position.

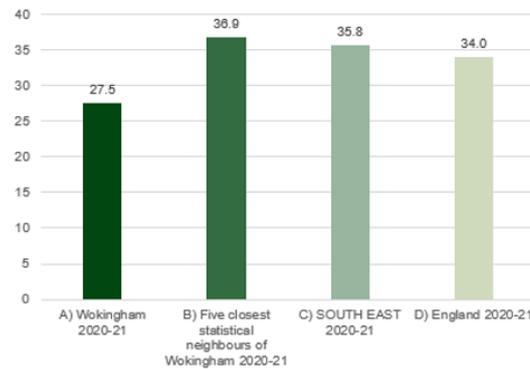
This report provides an update on the significant programme of work ongoing.

#### **.04 Children & Young People with SEND in Wokingham**

As previously reported to Schools Forum, the number of children & young people in Wokingham with an EHCP has risen by over 60% since 2017/18 with the number now above 1,400. The SEND Service are currently seeing around 30 requests to assess per month, with around 95% of those resulting in an EHCP.

Benchmarking with statistical neighbours, regional and national data shows that despite the significant increase seen locally, proportionately numbers remain below the % of population seen elsewhere. This indicates that the rise in numbers is unlikely to slow in the short term.

Number aged up to 25 with EHC plan (per 1,000 of 2-18 population)  
2020/21



#### .04 SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme

The purpose of the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme (SEND IIP) is to deliver the SEND Strategy (0-25). It has 5 priority aims:

1. *To strengthen local provision and quality of local practice*
2. *To improve the efficiency of processes (including timeliness and quality of EHCPs and the Annual Review process)*
3. *To ensure effective Transitions at all ages and stages*
4. *To strengthen sufficiency of local provision, more effective strategic commissioning and Value for Money, and greater impact on outcomes*
5. *All of the above enabled through effective and meaningful coproduction*

The SEND IIP is a large, ambitious programme of improvement and innovation, which currently runs until December 2022.

In addition to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND, the SEND IIP is also designed to ensure that Wokingham gets the best value for money from its allocation of resources to support delivery of services for children and young people with SEND, and their families.

In order to achieve this, deliverables within the programme are being reviewed for their impact on Value for Money, particularly in terms of their contribution to containment of pressures on the High Needs Block (HNB), and ensuring that the full range of resources across the local area are used in an intelligence-led, smart and strategic way.

Some examples of projects and activities within the SEND IIP which will help to achieve this include:

- Strengthening SEND Team operations to monitor and manage every child and young person with SEND currently in the system and coming through, with details of needs, costs and likely future costs
- Develop new models of delivery to meet needs more cost effectively (including the Ordinarily Available project, Outreach support, training and development for professionals)
- Restructuring services to ensure efficient permanent teams are in place

- Redesign of Local Offer and IAG platforms for parents, carers and professionals to help make support, information advice and guidance easier to access
- Transform model of working with VCS providers to support fundraising & target their support around priority issues
- Strengthen arrangements around contracts, Service Level Agreements
- Work strategically with partners across the landscape of SEND provision, and national agencies, to develop the most robust and sustainable approach to the High Needs Block
- Sharpen the focus of multiagency work on strategic commissioning, addressing Wokingham budget and resource challenges
- Ensure through the Sufficiency Planning (see section below) that Wokingham builds and makes best use of local provision, and dependency on Out-of-Borough provision is addressed in a sustainable way

Appendix A - summary of SEND IIP governance and working groups.

## .05 **SEND Sufficiency Planning**

The most significant barrier to successfully addressing the financial challenges on the High Needs Block in Wokingham is the availability of suitable places locally that meet the needs of our children & young people.

The SEND Sufficiency Project will identify and clearly map the needs which we will require to meet in future years in order to deliver for those living with SEND. It is already recognised that, similarly to most other LAs, we have an increasing need for places for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the new free school currently being developed in Winnersh will provide increased opportunity to meet such needs locally.

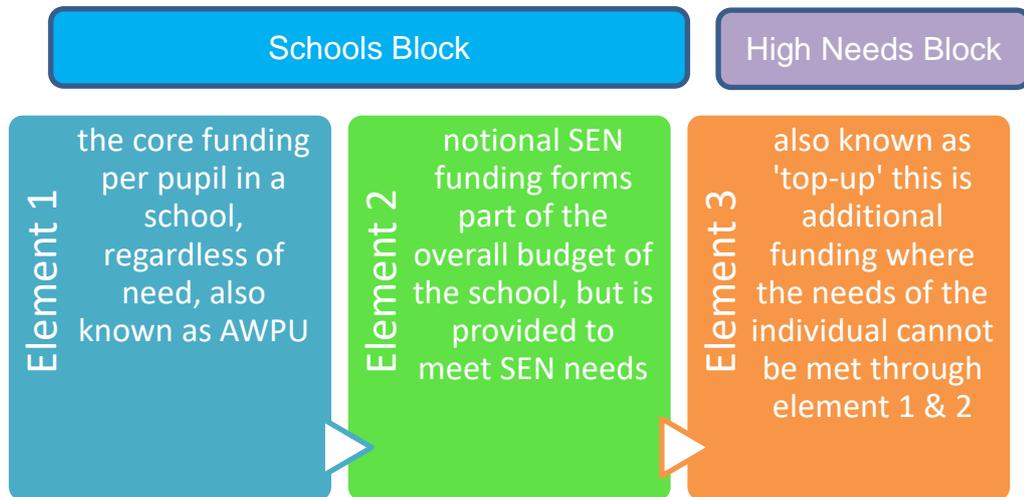
The new free school opening in September 2022, is being designed to meet some of those needs offering 70 places for Wokingham children and young people who would otherwise have been likely to attend schools outside the borough, mainly in the independent and non-maintained sector. Due to the absence of suitable local alternatives, and our legal duty to comply with parental preferences unless there is an equally or more suitable place available, we are currently often compelled to name expensive places in these schools within the child's EHCP.

The establishment of an increase in suitable local provision will allow more opportunity to offer alternatives to parents/carers. Work is being undertaken with providers of local provision to make places within their establishments attractive and more likely to be the preferred option for the majority of families.

Current data indicates that there will continue to be a growth in demand for SEND places. While the improvement work underway cannot change demand, as it is based on children's assessed needs, the opportunity to be able to offer more local provision will lead to much less reliance on places in the non-maintained and independent sector driving down the cost base incurred through the High Needs Block.

## 06 Element 2 Funding - Notional SEN

Funding for children and young people with SEN in schools is constructed from 3 elements, not all of which are funded from the High Needs Block.



While element 2 forms part of the Schools Block funding formula through the APT (Authority Proforma Tool) it is not a funding factor as such, but uses a locally determined % of other APT factors to allocate to schools.

The basic formula is the same nationally, but LAs can decide what percentage of each specified element they take into consideration when calculating it. Factors that could be included in the calculation are:

- Prior attainment
- EAL
- IDACI (your local deprivation index figure)
- Free School Meals
- Mobility

The calculation for element 2 in Wokingham has been in place for a number of years and is based on the following % allocation within the Schools Block:

- 100% prior attainment factor
- 35% lump sum factor

For 2021/22, this means that £8.8m of Schools Block funding was allocated as 'Notional SEN' across primary and secondary schools in Wokingham. This represents around 7.5% of the overall Schools Block funding. Appendix B provides Notional SEN allocations included in school budgets for the current financial year.

Element 2 is often referred to as '£6k per pupil' however in reality, given the % allocation basis that is required through the funding formula, it is not calculated in this way by LAs.

As part of a robust action plan to addressing SEND improvements in Wokingham, it is helpful to understand how collective resources are being used across the borough

in supporting children and young people. This assists in delivering resources targeted in the most effective way.

Given that the number of pupils with SEND in Wokingham has increased so significantly since the basis of allocation was last reviewed, and as reported to Schools Forum in December 2020, a review of Notional SEN forms part of improvement programme actions. The SEND Service has started to work with schools to better understand how funding is being used, and Schools Forum are asked to support that review. To allow time to undertake an appropriate review, it is intended that the learning will be used to inform task & finish group considerations for the 2023/24 Schools Block Budget.

**.07 High Needs Provision Capital Allocation 2021/22**

In late March this year, the ESFA announced High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) for 2021/22. These allocations are to support the provision of High Needs places needed by September 2022, with Wokingham being allocated £1.26m.

Detailed plans are currently being drawn up for use of the funding, with support for the new secondary resource base being a key consideration.

**.08 Financial Outlook & Deficit Management Plan**

Addressing the challenges on the High Needs Block in the short term is complex, particularly in light of the continuing significant rise in the number of children and young people with an EHCP.

The significant work being taken forward under the governance of the SEND IIP provides a platform for a longer term reduction of out of borough placements, the key to unlocking financial sustainability. Work continues across a range of actions in support of that overall objective.

Detailed modelling continues to inform multi-year budget planning and further updates on this will be brought to the next meeting of Schools Forum.

As part of ongoing liaison with the DfE, a meeting is scheduled for the 17<sup>th</sup> August to discuss progress and support required in addressing the financial challenges faced.

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