

## **Appendix Three: SEND new premises programme**

There are three components to the SEND new premises programme:

### ***On existing sites / smaller provision***

The first two are (normally) on the sites of mainstream schools, run by those schools.

- Special Resource Bases (SRB)
- Special Units

Resource bases are for children that are expected to spend the majority of their time in mainstream classes (as a guide 70% mainstream and 30% in the unit). Units are for children who will spend the majority of their time in the Unit (as a guide, 30% mainstream and 70% in the unit). Consequently Units will be larger premises, even if the number of children are the same. Admission is through the facility being named in an Education Health and Care Plan, following consultation.

Both SRBs and Units will have more space per child than mainstream provision, not least because of their high staff to pupil ratio and small teaching groups. Both may have specialist therapy areas, small group teaching spaces and staff facilities and meeting rooms.

Currently Wokingham has a number of primary schools and one secondary school with designated Resource Bases, covering autism, speech, language and communications difficulties, hearing impairment and physical disabilities but these are subject to review because the number of places commissioned and the operational model of the existing provision does not match current needs. This has resulted in a high number of empty places being funded, whilst needing to commission appropriate specialist provision in independent and non-maintained schools to be able to meet the complex needs of children and young people.

The size of Resource Bases can vary, but in Wokingham current provision has a range of 8 to 25 funded places.

The programme is in development and it is anticipated that this will be the subject of further reports to Executive, towards the end of 2022 for implementation in September 2023..

### ***New Schools***

Projections point to a need for additional local provision, because of rising need for certain categories of SEND. Moreover, approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the Wokingham children on the roll of special schools are placed outside the borough. Creating local special schools will help meet the needs of new children needing special school places, and, in time, has the potential to reduce the usage of high cost out of borough independent and non-maintained special school places.

Recognising the need for additional special school capacity, the DfE has determined that circa 60 new Special Free School Places will be created through the “Wave 15” national Free School programme. Local Authorities have been invited to submit proposals in October 2022. Successful Local Authorities will be required to commission places at the new school or schools (and so guarantee the revenue funding for the school) and will write the specification and be part of the appointment process for the Trust that will run the school. They will also be expected to identify a site for the new school that is available for free or at a peppercorn rate (this ordinarily means the local authority will need to provide the site). In exchange the DfE will provide the premises and will appoint a Trust to run the school (which would normally be the Trust the Council favours).

Wokingham is proposing two new secondary schools, each offering 100 places.

- A Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) focused school.
- A Severe Learning Disability and Speech, Language and Communication difficulty school (essentially very similar to Addington School in Woodley).

These schools would complement the existing provision in Wokingham:

- Addington School, 255 places, 3 to 19, for children with a range of needs (10), including Learning Disabilities.
- Chiltern Way, 69 places, 8 to 16, a school for children with SLCN - Speech, language and Communication and ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- The Oak Tree School, 75 places, 5 to 19, for children with ASD, expected to open 2023

### **New school site area**

Each new school would need between 1.22 and 1.63 Hectares for the site, based on DfE non-statutory accommodation and site guidance for special schools.

### **Proposed sites**

Two sites in the Council’s ownership have been identified:

- Part of Rooks Nest Farm, Barkham Ride, Finchampstead, Wokingham RG40 4EU
- Part of Grays Farm Heathlands Road, Wokingham RG40 3AN