

<b>High Needs Block Budget 2021/22</b>			
<b>Report being considered by:</b>	Schools Forum on 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2021		
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<b>Item for:</b>	Decision	<b>By:</b>	All Forum Members

## 1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out the current financial position of the high needs budget for 2020/21, the position as far as it can be predicted for 2021/22, including the likely shortfall, together with recommendations on Invest to Save projects and a prediction of potential future HNB spend and savings.

## 2. Recommendation

2.1 To agree the overall HNB budget for 2021-22. This includes a 0.25% schools block transfer to fund the Invest to Save projects set out in Section 6 of Appendix A of this report.

2.2 To agree to invest a further 0.25% schools block transfer in the Invest to Save projects detailed in Section 7 of Appendix A of this report.

2.3 To delegate authority to the Head of Education Services to determine which invest to save projects will be funded and the level of funding for each project following consultation with the Heads Funding Group at the 23 March 2021 meeting.

<b>Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?</b>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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## 3. Introduction

3.1 Setting a balanced budget for the High Needs Block continues to be a significant challenge; funding received for this block has only seen minimal increases for several years, yet the demand in terms of numbers of high needs pupils and unit costs of provision has continued to rise. Place funding has remained static in spite of increasing numbers, and in 2015/16 local authorities took on responsibility for students up to the age of 25 with SEND in FE colleges without the appropriate funding to cover the actual cost. The number of children with EHCPs is increasing, in spite of the threshold for an EHCP remaining the same and being applied robustly.

3.2 Up until 2016-17, West Berkshire was setting a balanced high needs budget. Since then, the budget has been under pressure on an annual basis, with savings identified each year to reduce the overspend. A decision was made to set a deficit budget for the first time in 2016/17.

3.3 Savings of £219k were implemented in 2017/18 and a further £306k in 2018/19. Despite these savings a budget was set in 2018/19 which included a planned overspend

of £703k. The budget set for 2019/20 included a planned overspend of £1.6M. The budget set for 2020/21 included a planned overspend of £1.18m.

3.4 The pressure on the high needs block is a national issue, and many local authorities have significant over spends and have also set deficit budgets. South East regional benchmarking data shows that in West Berkshire overspending on the HNB as a % of the total HNB budget is one of the lowest in the region, but nevertheless it is an issue of ongoing concern.

3.5 The Local Authority's statutory duties for children with SEND are effectively open ended in that if a child requires an EHC Plan it must be provided regardless of budgetary constraints. Criteria for initiating an Education, Health and Care assessment are robustly applied by the SEN Panel (which has Headteacher representation on it). EHC assessment requests are only agreed if there is clear evidence that the child has complex and persistent needs which persist in spite of the school having followed the "graduated approach" set out in the SEND Code of Practice, and having invested its own resources to support the child. However, in spite of robust management of demand, the number of children with EHCPs continues to rise. The total number of EHCPs has risen from 822 in 2015 to 1078 in 2020, an increase of 31%. Appendix C shows that most of this increase is in EHCPs in specialist placements rather than mainstream schools, which is primarily what is driving the HNB budget pressure. The increase by 41% in non maintained and independent special school placements during this period is also having a significant financial impact.

3.6 The creation of more local provision for children with SEMH and autism, through the SEND Strategy, will alleviate these pressures to some extent as local maintained provision will be more cost effective than independent and non maintained provision. However, it is also critical that mainstream schools are supported to maintain more children with SEND in mainstream settings if the HNB overspend is to be effectively addressed. This includes in particular children with SEMH and autism. The invest to save projects set out in section 6 of this report aim to reduce exclusions and demand from schools for children to be placed in alternative specialist placements.

3.7 Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Appendix A show where the predicted 2021-22 costs exceed 2020-21 budgets.

3.8 The net shortfall in the 2021-22 HNB budget, is **£4,086,306**. This includes a predicted 20/21 overspend of £980,686 and carried forward overspends of £1,279,122 in 19/20 and of £521,000 in 18/19. (Total carried forward overspend of £2,780,808). Without the carried forward overspends, the shortfall in 21-22 would be **£1,305,498**.

3.9 The increase can be explained as follows:

- Overspend of £521,000 in 2018-19, carried forward
- Overspend of £1,279,122 in 2019-20, carried forward.
- Estimated overspend of £980,686 in 2020-21, carried forward
- Additional anticipated pressures in 21-22, over and above the deficit budget set in 2020-21, which relate to mainly to top up funding for children with EHCPs in a variety of settings. See Appendix A sections 2 and 3 below for more detail.

3.10 An extensive review of SEN provision and services took place during 2018, with full involvement of all stakeholders, including parents and schools. This resulted in a new 5 year SEND Strategy for West Berkshire which was approved by West Berkshire Council and the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group in November 2018. The Strategy seeks to address rising costs in the High Needs Block. It has 5 key priority areas:

- Improve the capacity of mainstream schools to meet the needs of children with SEND
- Expand local provision for children with SEND in order to reduce reliance on external placements
- Improve post 16 opportunities for young people with SEND, including better access to employment
- Improve preparation for adulthood, including transition from children's to adults' services in Social Care and Health
- Improve access to universal and targeted Health services for children with SEND

3.11 Work is now under way to implement the strategy, which should achieve savings in the High Needs Block over the next five years, but savings will take time to be realised.

3.12 Details of the services paid for from the high needs budget and the corresponding budget information are set out in Appendix A, together with an explanation of the reasons for budget increases.

#### 4. **Summary Financial Position**

4.1 The latest estimate of expenditure in the High Needs Block budget for both 2020/21 and 2021/22 is set out in Table 1. The figures are based on all services continuing at current staffing levels and contract costs, with no change in the funding rates for top ups and the current/known number and funding level of pupils.

4.2 Most of the DSG allocation for the high needs block is now confirmed. Part of it is estimated and will be based on the actual number of pupils in special schools in the October 2020 census, and import/export adjustments based on the January 2020 census and February 2020 ILR.

<b>TABLE 1</b>	<b>2020/21 Budget £</b>	<b>2020/21 Forecast £</b>	<b>2021/22 Estimate £</b>
Place Funding	6,082,000	6,082,000	6,141,000
Top Up Funding	12,865,755	12,772,712	14,749,150
PRU Funding (top ups only)	1,375,920	1,455,800	1,393,370
Other Statutory Services	1,541,640	1,507,370	1,621,260
Non Statutory Services	1,063,270	930,770	1,385,814
Support Service Recharges	186,330	186,330	188,790
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>23,114,920</b>	<b>22,934,990</b>	<b>25,479,384</b>

HNB DSG Allocation	-21,667,304	-21,691,304	-23,625,318
0.25% Schools Block Transfer Existing Invest to save projects	-263,285	-263,000	-274,284
0.25% Schools Block Transfer New Invest to save projects			-274,284
In year overspend	1,184,331	980,686	1,305,498
HNB DSG Overspend from previous year	1,800,122	1,800,122	2,780,808
<b>Total cumulative deficit</b>	<b>2,984,453</b>	<b>2,780,808</b>	<b>4,086,306</b>

4.3 There is a forecast shortfall of **£1,305,498** in the 2021/22 HNB.

4.4 Proposals for savings were considered by the HFG and Schools Forum, but a decision was taken not to make any cuts because of the potential increase in statutory expenditure if preventative services are removed or reduced.

4.5 A consultation took place with schools in November 2020 on whether to transfer 0%, 0.25% or 0.5% from the Schools Block to the HNB. This was voted on and confirmed at the last Schools Forum meeting as 0.25%, which amounts to £274k. It has been agreed by the HFG and Schools Forum that this funding can be used for continuation of the Invest to Save projects originally agreed in 2020-21. See Section 6 of this report.

4.6 A request was made at the last HFG / Schools Forum for new Invest to Save proposals for consideration, to be funded through a further 0.25% of the Schools Block. See section 7 of Appendix A of this report.

Appendix A sets out the detail of the budgets included within the High Needs Block, and the reasons for the pressure on the 2020-21 HNB budget.

## 5. Appendices

Appendix A – High Needs Budget detail

Appendix B – HNB Projected Expenditure and Income

Appendix C – Increase in EHCPs by type of placement

## High Needs Budget Detail

### 1. PLACE FUNDING – STATUTORY

- 1.1 Place funding is agreed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and has to be passed on to the institution, forming their base budget. Academy and FE places are included in the initial HNB allocation but the agreed place numbers are then deducted and paid to the institution direct (DSG top slice). From 2018/19 pre 16 resource unit place funding was reduced from £10,000 to £6,000 per place, and each pupil within the unit is included in the main school formula funding allocation.
- 1.2 The ESFA will not fund any overall increases to places. If additional places are needed in academies or FE colleges, a request can be made to the ESFA. However, any additional places agreed would be top sliced from West Berkshire's HNB allocation in 2021-22; no additional funding is made available.
- 1.3 In total the allocated planned places in 2020-21 are 723 (see Table 1 below).
- 1.4 Requests have been made for an increase of 15 post 16 places in academies in 21-22, but this is offset by a reduction of 3 pre 16 places in academy resourced schools, so the net increase is 12. This net increase reflects an increase in placements in resourced provision in academies.
- 1.5 The increases and reductions in planned places for 21-22 are shown below by establishment.

Establishment	Current planned places	Proposed planned places	Change
Fir Tree ASD	7	8	+1
Trinity ASD/SpLD	49	54	-1 Pre 16 +6 Post 16 Net +5
Kennet PD/Hi	32	36	-2 Pre 16 +6 Post 16 Net +4
St. Bart's Post 16	3	5	+2
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>+12</b>

- 1.6 Planned places at establishments not listed above will remain the same for 2021-22.
- 1.7 It is not possible to increase planned places in maintained schools unless there are surplus planned places available for reallocation, which is not the case. There is a shortfall in planned places for children with EHCPs attending West Berkshire maintained special schools and PRUs, so this funding will need to be taken from the maintained special school and PRU EHCP top up budgets, creating additional pressure in those areas.

TABLE 1 - Place Funding Budget	2020/21 Budget			2021/22 Estimated Budget		
	No. of Places	£	Current No. of Pupils	Proposed No. of Places	£	Difference in number
Special Schools pre 16 (90540) –	286	2,860,000	409	286	2,860,000	0
Special Schools post 16 (90546) –	79	790,000		79	790,000	0
Resource Units Maintained pre 16 (90584) –	35	230,000	30	35	242,000	0
Resource Units Academies pre 16 (DSG top slice) –	103	684,000	101	101	634,000	-2
Mainstream Maintained post 16 –	5	25,000	6	5	38,000	0
Mainstream Academies post 16 (DSG top slice) –	16	96,000	19	30	180,000	+14
Further Education	133	737,000		133	737,000	-6
PRU Place Funding (90320)	66	660,000	72	66	660,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>6,082,000</b>		<b>735</b>	<b>6,141,000</b>	<b>+12</b>

## 2. TOP UP FUNDING – STATUTORY

2.1 Top up funding is paid to the institutions where we are placing pupils who live in West Berkshire (we do not pay our institutions top up funding for pupils who live outside West Berkshire). **Table 2** shows the budget and forecast for 2020/21 and the estimate for 2021/22.

TABLE 2	2019/20 Budget		2020/21 Budget			2021/22	Difference 20/21 budget & 21/22 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 10)	Over/ (under) £		
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	3,463,450	3,749,817	3,986,360	4,122,320	135,960	4,403,120	+416,760
Non WBC special schools (90548)	1,065,960	920,557	1,194,300	966,170	-228,130	1,324,500	+130,200
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	270,350	312,583	313,650	291,220	-22,430	314,000	+350
Resource Units Academies (90026)	946,530	826,870	948,280	979,460	31,180	1,113,300	+165,020
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	143,580	164,744	130,600	162,970	32,370	170,540	+39,940
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	667,330	822,349	779,450	796,680	17,230	818,660	+39,210

## High Needs Block Budget 2021/22

Mainstream Academies (90622)	267,460	360,616	389,600	398,370	8,770	423,560	33,960
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	73,030	79,555	70,590	138,450	67,860	160,510	89,920
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	1,030,380	911,178	1,068,200	1,008,830	-59,370	1,007,880	-60,320
Independent Special Schools (90579)	2,683,020	2,205,989	2,797,000	2,837,580	40,580	3,535,280	738,280
Further Education (90580)	1,408,870	1,141,252	1,087,730	1,039,410	-48,320	1,437,800	350,070
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	100,000	68,001	100,000	31,260	-68,740	40,000	-60,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,119,960</b>	<b>11,563,511</b>	<b>12,865,760</b>	<b>12,772,720</b>	<b>-93,040</b>	<b>14,749,150</b>	<b>+1,883,390</b>

2.2 Most top up budgets are under pressure, with the type of placement creating the greatest pressure shown below in order of cost.

- Independent special schools
- Maintained special schools
- Resource units academies
- Mainstream non West Berkshire
- Non West Berkshire special schools
- Resource units non West Berkshire
- Mainstream maintained
- Mainstream academies

2.3 However, there are also savings on two of the top up cost centres:

- Non maintained special schools
- Disproportionate high needs budget

2.4 The predictions of cost for 2021-22 take in to account known pupils whose needs can no longer be met in local schools, together with some cases which are due to go to the SEND Tribunal. It is not possible to predict all pupils who may need placements in 2021-22. The figures assume a middle ground between the best case scenario and the worst case scenario (financially) in terms of Tribunal outcomes.

### 2.5 Independent special schools

This is by far the greatest pressure in the top up budgets. The pressure reflects a number of factors including the fact that some highly complex children have needed to be placed in very expensive placements in 20-21 and so have only incurred part year

costs this year, but will incur full year costs in 21-22. In addition there are a number of children with very complex SEMH (including ASD in some cases) who are very likely to need specialist places in 21-22. A number of these children would be suitable for the new planned SEMH/ASD provision but it is not possible for their current placements to be sustained until the new provision is available. Every effort is being made to avoid independent specialist school placements if it is possible to do so, but realistically the chances of doing so are low.

## **2.6 West Berkshire maintained special schools**

This pressure reflects increasing numbers in our special schools, the need to compensate for inadequate planned place funding through the top up budget and some very high needs pupils needing additional support to maintain their placements. As there is no additional planned place funding for special schools, the extra planned place funding has been allowed for in this budget. Historically, special schools have only been paid £7,500 per extra place over and above the ESFA agreed planned places, which has placed an increasing strain on special schools as their numbers have increased. It is proposed that special schools from 2021-22 should be paid the full £10,000 for each additional place, which has been allowed for in the projected 2021-22 costs. In addition, a separate report to the Schools Forum recommends that an increase of 5% should be applied to the special school top up funding bands.

## **2.7 Resource Units Academies**

This pressure reflects a small number of young people with extremely complex physical disabilities attending our PD resourced provisions who would otherwise be in much more costly specialist placements. It also includes increased funding for several other children in our PD resources, as the needs of this cohort have become much more complex over time. In addition, the Fir Tree ASD Resource has been increasing its numbers up to the full capacity agreed when it was set up.

## **2.8 Mainstream top ups (non- West Berkshire schools)**

This increase reflects a higher number of families opting for cross border secondary placements, including two high cost young people who might otherwise be in specialist provision.

## **2.9 Non West Berkshire special schools**

This budget funds placements in special schools maintained by other Local Authorities and also special Free Schools. The increase is due to 4 students needing to move in to SEMH provision, including three currently in I-College and one currently in mainstream.

## **2.10 Resource units (non- West Berkshire)**

This increase reflects one additional student requiring a place at The Rise ASD provision in Bracknell.

## **2.11 Mainstream top ups (maintained and academies)**

This increase is due to a small increase in the number of EHCPs in mainstream schools, combined with an increase in the average cost of an EHCP.

## **2.12 FE Colleges**

The figures above assume the same level of budget requirement for FE College placements in 21-22 as currently. More detailed work is being done on this and it is possible that the budget requirement will be lower. An updated figure will be included in the next report to the HFG / Schools Forum on the HNB.

### 3. PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (PRU) – STATUTORY

3.1 **Table 3** shows the budgets for PRU top ups.

<b>TABLE 3</b>	<b>2019/20 Budget</b>		<b>2020/21 Budget</b>			<b>2021/22</b>	
<b>PRU Budgets</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Forecast £ (Month 10)</b>	<b>Over/ (under) £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	<b>Difference 20/21 budget &amp; 21/22 prediction</b>
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	757,700	871,370	818,400	884,350	65,950	821,920	+3,520
PRU EHCP SEMH Placements (90628)	331,400	505,724	557,520	571,450	13,930	571,460	+13,940
Non WBC PRU Top Up Funding (90626)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,089,100</b>	<b>1,377,094</b>	<b>1,375,920</b>	<b>1,455,800</b>	<b>79,880</b>	<b>1,393,370</b>	<b>+17,450</b>

3.2 The current year budget was based on the previous year's forecast. Schools Forum agreed to pilot a 50% contribution from schools for pupils that they placed. Heads have requested that this contribution remains until a review in March 2022. Permanent exclusions and sixth form are funded 100% by the High Needs Block less the average pupil led funding contribution recovered from schools. The estimate for 21/22 PRU Top Up Funding is based on the profile of pupils at I-College in the summer term.

3.3 The number of pupils with EHCPs being placed in PRUs is increasing as this can be an appropriate and cost effective provision for some young people. A new provision for pupils with EHCPs was set up in autumn 2019, The Pod. These placements are usually more cost effective than independent and non-maintained special school placements.

### 4. OTHER STATUTORY SERVICES

4.1 **Table 4** details the budgets for other statutory services.

TABLE 4 Other Statutory Services	2019/20 Budget		2020/21 Budget			2021/22	Difference 19/20 budget & 20/21 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 10)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	119,120	136,178	136,580	164,940	28,360	150,470	+13,890
Sensory Impairment (90290)	236,000	228,079	227,590	245,630	18,040	247,860	+20,270
SEN Commissioned Provision (90577)	527,150	515,446	567,650	567,040	-610	584,480	+16,830
Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	15,000	8,429	15,000	26,260	11,260	15,000	0
Therapy Services (90295)	261,470	244,291	261,470	259,330	-2,140	314,500	+53,030
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	28,240	21,603	28,240	20,540	-7,700	28,240	0
Home Tuition Service (90315)	102,080	71,277	0	0	0	0	0
Medical Home Tuition (90282)	119,920	90,601	205,000	140,000	-65,000	172,730	-32,270
Hospital Tuition (90610)	36,000	16,345	39,050	31,050	-8,000	39,280	+230
SEND Strategy (DSG) (90281)	56,200	33,015	61,060	52,580	-8,480	68,700	+7,640
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,501,180</b>	<b>1,365,264</b>	<b>1,541,640</b>	<b>1,507,370</b>	<b>-34,270</b>	<b>1,621,260</b>	<b>+79,620</b>

## 4.2 Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

4.2.1 This budget supports a small number of children with EHC Plans for whom the Authority has agreed an ABA programme. ABA is an intensive intervention programme for children with autism which aims to modify behaviours which are typical of ASD in order to allow children to function more successfully in school and in society.

4.2.2 This budget also covers the cost of children with EHC Plans accessing other bespoke educational packages where this is the most appropriate and cost effective way of meeting their needs, including SEN Personal Budgets.

4.2.3 The increase in costs represents an increase in Personal Budgets.

## 4.3 Sensory Impairment

4.3.1 Support for children with hearing, visual and multi-sensory impairments is purchased from the Berkshire Sensory Consortium Service. This includes support from qualified teachers of HI and VI, audiology and mobility support.

4.3.2 The budget requirement will be higher next year due to increased teachers' pay and pension costs.

#### **4.4 Engaging Potential**

4.4.1 Engaging Potential is an independent special school commissioned to provide alternative educational packages for 14 young people in Key Stage 4. Students placed at Engaging Potential are those who have EHC Plans for social, emotional and mental health difficulties and whose needs cannot be met in any other provision. This can include young people who have been excluded from specialist SEMH schools. The unit cost of a place represents good value for money compared to other independent schools for SEMH which typically start at around £70K per annum. The increase in cost for 2020-21 relates to the contract having been retendered in January 2020. The previous cost had remained fixed for several years under the previous contract so an inflationary increase was necessary. There have also been increased premises costs.

#### **4.5 Equipment for SEN Pupils**

4.5.1 This budget used to fund large items of equipment such as specialist chairs and communication aids for pupils with EHC Plans. The budget has been reduced a number of times in previous HNB savings programmes and was removed entirely in 2018-19 on the basis that schools would meet these costs. However, this created a pressure for nurseries as they do not have delegated SEN budgets, and for resourced schools which have a disproportionate number of children with specialist equipment needs. It was agreed in 2018-19 that a budget of £10,000 would be made available to meet these needs. In 2019-20 it was agreed that the budget should be increased again to £15,000 as demand for equipment for children in nurseries and resourced schools was increasing. The budget will overspend this year, mainly due to one exceptionally high need student in one of our PD resources. It is recommended that the budget stays the same for 2021-22 as although this is a budget which does come under pressure, we have successfully negotiated with Health to fund 50% of specialist seating in schools in future which should reduce pressure on this budget.

#### **4.6 Therapy Services (Contract with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust)**

4.6.1 The therapy services budget covers the costs for children with SEN who have speech and language therapy or occupational therapy in their EHC Plans.

4.6.2 Therapy services are provided by the Authority solely to children who have the need for a service stipulated and quantified in their EHC Plan. It is a statutory duty for the Local Authority to provide these therapies in these circumstances. The service is commissioned from the Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust.

4.6.3 We are currently in the process of extending the contract for one year with a view to a potential joint commissioning arranging with other neighbouring Local Authorities at the end of the 12 month period.

4.6.4 It has been necessary to fund an additional part time post due to the increasing volume of Tribunal cases which require involvement of a speech and language or occupational therapist.

#### **4.7 Elective Home Education (EHE) Monitoring**

4.7.1 There is a statutory duty for Local Authorities to monitor arrangements for EHE made by parents. The EHE monitoring sits within the Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service. The Elective Home Education Officer is 0.6fte and was a new post for September 2019. EHE numbers have been growing, both locally and nationally over

recent years but September and October 2020 have seen a steep rise in numbers due to COVID-19. In September 2019, eleven students were deregistered from schools; September 2020 saw 34 students deregistered. .

#### 4.8 Medical Tuition Service

4.8.1 The Medical Tuition Service (previously Home Tuition Service) is a statutory service providing home tuition to children with medical conditions and illness that prevent them accessing full-time school. This service was moved from i-College to the Local Authority with effect from September 2019 with savings and the following year's budget already agreed by Schools' Forum. £40K saving has been achieved as a result of transferring this service in house. Further savings have been proposed for 21/22

#### 4.9 Hospital Tuition

4.9.1 The Local Authority is obliged to pay the educational element of specialist hospital placements, usually for severe mental health issues. These placements are decided by NHS colleagues and we have no influence over the placement or duration of stay. As numbers and costs are impossible to predict, it is proposed that the 2021-22 budget remains the same as 2020-21. There is a small increase due to inflation increases in salaries for the proportion of staff time administering this service

#### 4.10 SEND Strategy Officer

4.10.1 In 2019-20 the Schools Forum agreed to fund a SEND Strategy Officer for three years initially to support implementation of the SEND Strategy 2018-23. Agreement was given by the Schools Forum in October 2020 that this post could be made permanent in order to attract and retain candidates of a suitable calibre.

### 5 NON STATUTORY Services

5.10 **Table 5** details the non-statutory service budgets for 2019-20, 2020-21, and estimates for 2021-22. These services are non-statutory so there is more potential scope to make savings, although a reduction in any of these budgets is likely to increase pressure on statutory budgets.

5.11 The table shows the budget for these services in 2021/22 assuming that the services continue and there are no changes to staffing levels.

5.12 Table 5 also includes ongoing funding for the "invest to save" initiatives agreed in 2020-21; an increase in the Vulnerable Children Grant and investment in the Therapeutic Thinking initiative in order to ensure it is sustainable.

TABLE 5 Non Statutory Services	2019/20 Budget		2020/21 Budget			2021/22	Difference 20/21 budget & 21/22 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 10)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	98,400	81,595	116,200	116,200	0	122,000	+5,800
Specialist Inclusion Support Service (90585)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0
PRU Outreach Service (90582)	61,200	61,200	61,200	61,200	0	61,200	0
Early Years Inclusion Fund (90238) moved to EY Block	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cognition and Learning Team(90280)	325,660	319,240	308,130	305,130	-3,000	328,100	+19,970
ASD Advisory Service (90830)	146,210	153,307	208,390	140,890	-67,500	229,970	+21,580
Vulnerable Children (90961)	50,000	50,000	179,400	129,400	-50,000	179,400	0
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	40,000	40,000	51,950	45,950	-6,000	56,560	+4,610
Dingley's Promise (90581)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	0
Therapeutic Thinking (90372)	0	0	58,000	52,000	-6,000	54,300	-3,700
New Invest to Save projects	0	0	0	0	0	274,284	274,284
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>801,470</b>	<b>785,342</b>	<b>1,063,270</b>	<b>930,770</b>	<b>-132,500</b>	<b>1,385,814</b>	<b>+322,544</b>

### 5.13 Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)

5.13.1 In September 2018, charges were introduced for placements at the Language and Literacy Centres at Theale and Winchcombe schools. Charges were based on 50% of the real cost of the place. These charges were introduced in order to alleviate pressure on the High Needs Block.

5.13.2 The LALs can provide 48 places per year for Year 5 students who have persistent difficulties with literacy and need an intensive programme delivered by a teacher qualified in specific literacy difficulties. Outcomes data for pupils who have attended the LALs shows that they make very significant progress prior to returning to Year 6 and then transitioning to secondary school.

5.13.3 Prior to the introduction of charging, all 48 LAL places were taken up every year. When charging was introduced, the number of children accessing the LALs reduced to 33 in 2018 and 26 in 2019.

5.13.4 A survey of primary school head teachers clearly demonstrated that a large number of primary schools would have liked to refer pupils to LAL but could not afford to do so. 77% of schools who responded said that they had referred children to LAL in the three years prior to charging being introduced, but only 36% had made referrals since charging was introduced. A number of schools commented that they would like to refer to LAL but the charge was prohibitively expensive, especially for small schools.

5.13.5 There is some evidence that the reduction in children being able to access LAL is linked to an increase in requests for EHCPs and an increase in potential appeals to the SEND Tribunal for places in specialist schools for children with dyslexia, with associated costs.

5.13.6 It is also possible that secondary schools will begin to see an impact of the reduction in children accessing LAL in terms of literacy levels of Year 7 cohorts and the numbers of children needing intensive support for literacy.

5.13.7 It was therefore agreed in 2020-21 that the charges for LAL places would be removed so that all children who need this provision can access it and in order to avoid pressure for EHCPs and specialist placements for children with literacy difficulties.

5.13.8 The increase proposed to the LAL budgets relates to the budgets not currently meeting costs of the host schools. In previous years this has been covered off by carried forward amounts but these funds have now been exhausted.

#### **5.14 Specialist Inclusion Support Service**

5.14.1 This service provides outreach support from West Berkshire's special schools to mainstream schools to support the inclusion of children with learning and complex needs in their local mainstream schools.

5.14.2 This budget has been subject to reductions in the previous financial years with the special schools providing the service absorbing the cost.

#### **5.15 PRU Outreach**

5.15.1 The PRU Outreach Service offers consultancy / outreach support mainly to students who have been attending the iCollege and are starting to attend a mainstream school. Schools may request Outreach for any pupil causing concern but it is dependent on capacity.

#### **5.16 Cognition and Learning Team**

5.16.1 The Cognition and Learning Team (CALT) provides advice, support and training to mainstream schools to help them to meet the needs of children with SEN. Staff are experienced SENCOs with higher level SEN qualifications.

5.16.2 Many primary schools are reliant on this service to supplement their own SEN provision and expertise, especially schools where the Head has to act as SENCO or where there is an inexperienced SENCO.

5.16.3 This is a partially traded service. All schools receive a small amount of free core service, but the majority of support now has to be purchased by schools.

5.16.4 The additional cost represents teachers' salary increases, pension and NI.

### 5.17 **ASD Advisory Service**

5.17.1 The ASD Advisory Service provides advice, support and training for mainstream schools on meeting the needs of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The purpose of the service is to enable children with ASD to be successfully included in mainstream schools wherever possible.

5.17.2 The context for this service is vastly increasing numbers of children with ASD diagnoses and mainstream schools having more and more difficulty meeting the needs of these children. The majority of our placements in non-West Berkshire special schools, independent special schools and non-maintained special schools are for children with ASD.

5.17.3 In 2020-21 it was agreed that there would be investment in the service to provide two HLTAs. Recruitment to these posts was delayed due to Covid 19, but both posts have now been filled successfully and staff will start in January.

5.17.4 The increase in cost represents teachers' salary increases, pension and NI, plus a vacancy being filled by a teacher on UPS (previous post holder not on UPS).

5.17.5 *See also section 6: Invest to Save Projects 2020-21*

### 5.18 **Vulnerable Children**

5.18.1 The Vulnerable Children Fund is a small budget used to help schools support their most vulnerable pupils on an emergency, unpredicted or short term basis.

5.18.2 The budget was gradually reduced from £120K over a number of years. This has always been a well used resource that helps schools support vulnerable pupils with complex needs.

5.18.3 It was agreed in 2020-21 that this budget would be increased, as an invest to save initiative, in order to support the roll out of Therapeutic Thinking in West Berkshire schools.

5.18.4 It is proposed that the increase agreed in 2020-21 is maintained in 2021-22. This would be the equivalent of using one year's funding for three permanently excluded pupils to attend the PRU. This additional sum would have the potential to support approximately 20 pupils and help prevent exclusions for each of them.

5.18.5 *See also section 6: Invest to Save Projects 2020-21*

### **5.19 Early Development and Inclusion Team**

5.19.1 The service comprises of 1.7 teachers who are specialists in early years and SEND. Children under 5 who are identified by Health professionals as having significant SEND are referred to this service. Staff initially visit children in their homes (if they are not yet in an early years setting) in order to promote their educational development and model strategies and resources for parents to use to support their child's progress.

5.19.2 EDIT teachers also assist with the transition to early years settings and schools, providing support and training for staff to help them to meet the child's needs, and continuing to visit for a period of time to provide ongoing support and advice. They also help to coordinate support which the family is receiving from other professionals.

5.19.3 The service is currently supporting approximately 100 children. It has been reduced in size in recent years from 3.4 to 1.7 staff.

### **5.20 Dingley's Promise**

5.20.1 Dingley's Promise is a charitable organisation which provides pre-school provision for children under 5 with SEND in West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham. It is the only specialist early years SEND setting in the private, voluntary and independent early years sector in West Berkshire. It provides an alternative to mainstream early year's settings, where experience and expertise in SEND can vary greatly. Parents are able to take up their early year's entitlement at Dingley's Promise, rather than at a mainstream early years setting, if they wish. However, Dingley's Promise are only able to claim the standard hourly rate for providing the early years entitlement as mainstream settings, in spite of offering specialist provision, higher ratios and more one to one support.

5.20.2 In 2017-18, the service was running at a loss and there was a risk it would cease to be viable in this area without some Council funding. It was agreed in 2018-19 that a grant of £30,000 would be made to Dingley's Promise in order to maintain the service in this area.

### **5.21 Therapeutic Thinking Officer**

5.21.1 A therapeutic thinking approach has been introduced in West Berkshire, with an extensive training programme to help staff in schools to understand how to support children and young people in schools in a trauma informed way. In 2020-21 it was agreed that one year funding would be given to employ a Therapeutic Thinking Officer in order to lead on ongoing roll out of training and continue to embed therapeutic thinking approaches in schools. Following the presentation of an evaluation of the therapeutic approaches initiative, it was agreed by the Schools Forum in January 2021 that this post could be made permanent from 2021-22.

## **6. Invest to Save Projects initially agreed in 2020-2021 (now extended to 21-22)**

The Schools Forum agreed, in January 2020, to fund the following Invest to Save projects with the aim of achieving savings in the longer term. The Schools Forum

also agreed at its meeting in January 2021 that these projects would continue to be funded in 2021-22 using the 0.25% transfer from the Schools Block.

## **6.1 Recruitment of Therapeutic Thinking Officer £54,000**

6.1.1 In order to ensure that therapeutic thinking could be moved forward in a timely way and embedded in schools, it was agreed that a new post of Therapeutic Thinking Officer would be created and offered as a three year temporary contract initially. This is a Band K post with agreed annual funding of £58K. This will be made a permanent post in 2021-22.

### 6.1.2 Evaluation data

Reported to a previous meeting of the Schools Forum and therefore not included in this report.

### 6.1.3 Success Criteria

- Therapeutic Thinking Training offered face to face or online to Head Teachers and key staff 6 weekly
- Therapeutic Thinking surgery held for schools weekly
- Therapeutic Thinking newsletter distributed monthly
- Therapeutic Thinking network meetings held termly
- Face to face support meetings held with schools (as requested)
- TT Vlogs introduced Nov 2020 in response to Secondary HT feedback to be distributed fortnightly)
- Bid writing with schools to ease workload (as requested)
  
- Impact report writing with schools to ease workload (as requested)

Method of measuring impact:

- Monitoring by Therapeutic Thinking Officer
- Quarterly report from Therapeutic Thinking Officer
- Feedback from schools

### 6.1.4 Recommendation

It was recommended that this funding be agreed for 2021-22 and made a permanent commitment in the HNB so that a permanent appointment can be made to the post. This is considered necessary in order to attract / retain candidates of the necessary calibre. This recommendation has been accepted by the Schools Forum.

## **6.2 Increase in Vulnerable Children Grant £125,000**

6.2.1 The Vulnerable Children Grant was increased from £50,000 to £179,400 in order to:

- Provide VCG funding for more children and / or for longer periods

- Provide funding to schools when they admit a child who has been permanently excluded from another school
- Support schools with implementation of Therapeutic Thinking approaches, eg. funding to support implementation of personalised therapeutic plans

#### 6.2.2 Evaluation Data

Report considered at previous meeting of the Schools Forum and therefore not included here.

#### 6.2.3 Success Criteria

- Attendance of child/children has improved
- A decrease in incidents of anti-social behaviour
- Child/children are more emotionally and socially aware and are seeking the support of an adult rather than demonstrating dysregulation
- Child/children is having less conflict with others
- Child/children are able to remain in class more
- Child/children have no or fewer exclusions

Method of measuring impact:

- Feedback surveys from schools

#### 6.2.4 Recommendation

It was recommended that this funding continues in 2021-22 and is reviewed for 2022-23. This recommendation has been accepted by the Schools Forum.

### **6.3 Expansion of the ASD Advisory Team to include 2 x Specialist Higher Level Teaching Assistants for deployment in schools £57,800.**

6.3.1 Due to the significant rise in children with ASD in schools and the inability of the ASD Team to provide intensive, targeted work due to resource constraints, it was agreed that funding of £57,800 would be made available in order to build capacity and expertise in schools, help schools to meet need effectively, maintain children in mainstream wherever possible and to support joint working between home and school, working alongside the Autism Adviser for Families.

#### 6.3.2 Evaluation Data

Recruitment to these posts had been planned for April 2020 but had to be put on hold due to the pandemic. Recruitment took place in the autumn term with one member of staff starting in December 2020 and one in January 2021. Plans are in place to start work on two targeted projects in January 2020, one in primary schools focusing on improving behaviour by reducing anxiety and one in

secondary schools focusing on emotionally based school avoidance. As the projects have only recently started there is no evaluation data available yet.

### 6.3.3 Success Criteria

#### Secondary schools project - young people with autism who are emotionally based school avoiders

Outcomes/success criteria for pupils:

- Those at Level 2 move to Level 1 or better (these levels are from the EPS EBSA guidance)
- Those at Level 1 move to very few instances of reluctance to attend and/or anxiety around attending is reduced
- Data on attendance improves

Method of measuring impact:

- Pupil questionnaires (pre and post intervention)
- Parent feedback (pre and post intervention)
- School feedback (pre and post intervention)
- Attendance data

#### Primary schools project – improving behaviour by reducing anxiety

Schools will identify personalised outcomes for individuals in conjunction with the ASD team

Outcomes /success criteria for pupils:

- Improved attendance
- Fewer incidents of behaviour that causes concern
- Levels of anxiety reduced

Method of measuring impact:

- Pupil questionnaires (pre and post intervention)
- Parent feedback (pre and post intervention)
- School feedback (pre and post intervention)

### 6.3.4 Recommendation

It was recommended that this funding continues in 2021-22 and is reviewed for 2022-23. This recommendation has been accepted by the Schools Forum.

## 7. Additional invest to save proposals 2021/22

7.1 A request was made at the last HFG / Schools Forum for new Invest to Save proposals for consideration, to be funded through a further 0.25% of the Schools Block.

7.2 The proposals set out below have been compiled for consideration and were discussed at the Heads Funding Group meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.

7.3 It is proposed that authority is delegated to the Head of Education Services to determine which invest to save projects will be funded and the level of funding for each project following consultation with the Heads Funding Group at the 23 March 2021 meeting.

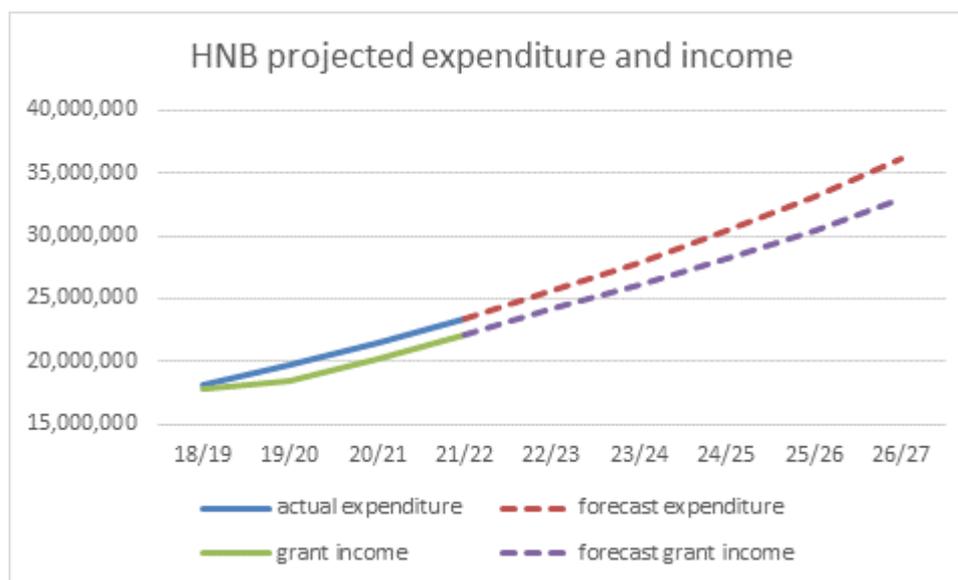
7.4 More information will be provided to the HFG meeting on 23/3/21 in respect of the incidence of the types of needs which these proposals will address and the potential savings to be achieved.

Proposal	Rationale	Cost
<p><b>1. Funding (for allocation to schools) to support children who are Emotionally Based School Avoiders</b></p> <p>Allocated by newly formed EBSA Forum to support children to return to school and maintain attendance. Could be used for TA support, teaching support, resources, training etc or to assist schools to purchase provision such as EHA</p>	<p>Number of children who are EBSA is increasing significantly and increasingly they are requiring expensive specialist placements. Earlier, more intensive intervention may help to avoid this.</p>	<p><b>£52,685 / £82,500</b></p>
<p><b>2. 0.5 EP to lead PATHS meetings and advise schools on strategies for children who are Emotionally Based School Avoiders</b></p>	<p>EBSA Guidance developed by the EPS includes the opportunity for schools to request PATHS meetings led by the EPS for children who are EBSA, but the current service lacks capacity for this work and schools may not be able to afford to purchase it from the EPS.</p>	<p><b>£33,240</b></p>
<p><b>3. 1FTE EBSA Coordinator in the Education Welfare Service</b> To coordinate support around complex EBSA cases and ensure effective multi agency working in order to maintain children in school. To collate information on EBSA</p>	<p>Once EBSA cases have become entrenched there is often no alternative other than a specialist placement. Earlier intervention sometimes fails because of lack of a rapid and joined up multi agency</p>	<p><b>£41,350</b></p>

cases across the Authority and track progress. To oversee funding allocations from the proposed EBSA fund (see above)	response and because no one single agency has responsibility for these cases.	
<b>4. 1FTE Outreach Worker in EHA to work with children who are Emotionally Based School Avoiders</b>	The Emotional Health Academy already works with children who are EBSA but lacks capacity to provide the very intensive support needed in some cases, particularly as numbers are increasing	<b>£34,410</b>
<b>5. Funding (for allocation to schools) to support children with ASD who are at risk of requiring specialist placement, allocated by ASD Team</b>  Could be used for TA support, teaching support, resources, training etc.	A high proportion of children who move in to specialist placements have ASD. Short term funding for intensive support could help to avoid placement breakdown	<b>£52,685 / £82,500</b>
<b>6. Specialist Social Communication and Interaction teacher to support schools in managing children who are waiting for ASD assessment</b>  Attached to existing ASD Team to allow the team to support children who are awaiting ASD assessment / diagnosis	A high proportion of children who move in to specialist placements have ASD or traits of ASD. The ASD Team currently only has capacity to support children with a diagnosis. An additional post would allow the team to work with children who are awaiting assessment / diagnosis and who may be presenting just as many challenges for schools as children with a diagnosis.	<b>£59,630.</b>
<b>7. Specialist ADHD teacher to support schools in managing needs of children with ADHD</b>  Attached to existing ASD Team. This is a need already identified in the SEND Strategy.	Increasing numbers of children who transfer to specialist placements have comorbid diagnoses of ASD/ADHD	<b>£59,630.</b>

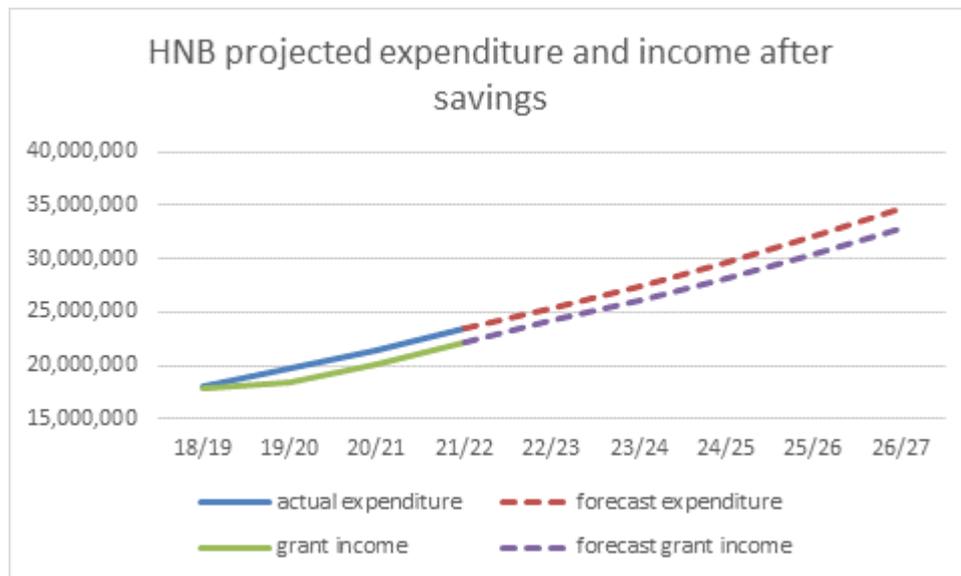
### Projected HNB expenditure and income

- The graph and table below show predicted expenditure and income up to 26-27 if expenditure continues to increase at the current rate of 9.07% per year. Income is assumed to increase by 9.6% increase for 22/23, with subsequent years estimated at an increased income of 8%.



	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27
expenditure	18,059,839	19,793,060	21,449,502	23,433,900	25,559,823	27,878,611	30,407,758	33,166,350	36,175,201
grant income	17,849,038	18,364,593	20,148,470	22,079,318	24,198,933	26,134,847	28,225,635	30,483,686	32,922,381

- If expenditure continues to rise at the current rate, and if investment in the HNB by central government remains at current rates, there will be a funding gap of £3,252,820 by 2026-27. This does not take in to account carried forward overspends.
- The graph and table below show income increasing at the same rate, but a lower increase in expenditure based on savings projections including the proposed new secondary SEMH provision and other placement savings as set out in a report to the HFG / Schools Forum in October 2020. This report assumed a reduction in permanent exclusions and in SEMH and ASD placements.



	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27
expenditure	18,059,839	19,793,060	21,449,502	23,433,900	25,403,795	27,457,286	29,633,288	32,012,332	34,779,263
grant income	17,849,038	18,364,593	20,148,470	22,079,318	24,198,933	26,134,847	28,225,635	30,483,686	32,922,381

4. This projection shows a smaller gap between expenditure and income of £1,856,882.
5. The estimated reduction in specialist placements included in these figures and based on the October 2020 report did not take in to account the new invest to save proposals included in this report.
6. Further work would be needed to assess the reduction in specialist placements required in order to bring expenditure in line with income.

**1. Increase in EHCPs since 2015 and analysis of placement type**

	2015 SEN2	2016 SEN2	2017 SEN2	2018 SEN2	2019 SEN2	Current 2020	Rise in number	% rise
1. Total number of EHCPs	822	897	938	971	1034	1078	256	31%
2. EHCPs in mainstream schools (maintained and academy combined)	312	295	260	309	344	335	23	7%
3. EHCPs in resourced units (mainstream and academy combined)	82	90	109	105	111	125	43	52%
4. EHCPs in maintained special schools	259	273	279	269	273	276	17	7%
5. EHCPs in all other special schools – Free / Academy, Non Maintained and Independent combined	63	75	84	80	95	89	26	41%
6. EHCPs in PRUs	7	13	7	15	22	22	15	214%
7. EHCPs in FE (General FE and specialist FE combined)	55	117	147	130	127	141	86	156%

