

High Needs Block Budget 2023/24			
Report being considered by:	Schools' Forum on 5 th December 2022		
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Item for:	Information	By:	All Forum Members

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out the current financial position of the high needs budget for 2022/23 and the position as far as it can be predicted for 2023/24, including the likely shortfall.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To note the overall HNB budget for 2023-24. It should be noted that at this stage the figures do not include any transfer from the Schools Block.

Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?	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. The 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 local authorities have taken 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 significantly, in spite of the threshold for an EHCP remaining the same and being applied robustly. These pressures have been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic which has caused some children to fall further behind, resulting in more EHC requests, and which has exacerbated a pre existing issue with rising incidence of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

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. A decision was made to set a deficit budget for the first time in 2016/17.

3.3 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. 20 Local Authorities with the highest level of overspend are now part of the Government's Safety Valve Programme. A further 55 Local Authorities are part of the Government's Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme. There are 3 tranches to this programme; West Berkshire is in the third tranche (due to having one of the lower levels of overspend) which means that the programme will not start in West Berkshire until summer 2023. The DBV programme

will deliver some invest to save funds but it is not clear yet what the level of funding will be.

3.4 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). However, in spite of robust management of demand, the number of children with EHCPs continues to rise. The total number of EHCPs has increased by 41% since the Children and Families Act came in in 2014. Most of this increase is in EHCPs in specialist placements rather than mainstream schools, which is primarily what is driving the HNB budget pressure

3.5 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 agreed in 2021-22 and 2022-23 aim to reduce exclusions and demand from schools for children to be placed in alternative specialist placements.

3.6 Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Appendix A show where the predicted 2023-24 costs exceed 2022-23 budgets.

3.7 The net shortfall in the 2023-24 HNB budget, is **£8,668,928**. This includes a predicted 22/23 overspend of £2,277,318 and carried forward overspends of £3,596,982 from previous years. Without the carried forward overspends, the shortfall in 23-24 would be **£2,794,628**.

3.8 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 2022/23 and 2023/24 is set out in Table 1. The figures are based on current and anticipated numbers of high needs pupils. At this point they assume no change in top up funding rates for EHCPs in West Berkshire schools. However, schools are highlighting concerns about their ability to meet the needs of children with EHCPs based on funding bands which have not increased for many years. In particular, some schools with resourced provision are raising concerns about viability of their provision based on existing funding rates, and this is something which the HFG / Schools Forum will need to consider.

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 2022 census, and import/export adjustments based on the January 2022 census and February 2022 ILR.

TABLE 1	2022/23 Budget £	2022/23 Forecast £	2023/24 Estimate £
Place Funding	6,482,050	6,498,050	6,502,050
Top Up Funding	16,497,950	16,913,794	17,910,900
PRU Funding (top ups only)	1,597,160	1,810,640	1,781,420
Other Statutory Services	1,851,200	1,817,007	2,149,357
Non Statutory Services	1,621,221	1,580,563	1,608,061
Support Service Recharges	191,506	191,506	192,960
Total Expenditure	28,241,087	28,811,560	30,144,748
HNB DSG Allocation	-26,234,076	-26,234,076	-27,350,120
0.25% Schools Block Transfer - Invest to save projects	-300,166	-300,166	
In year overspend	1,706,845	2,277,318	2,794,628
HNB DSG Overspend from previous year	4,187,901	3,596,982	5,874,300
Total cumulative deficit	5,894,746	5,874,300	8,668,928

4.3 There is a forecast shortfall of **£2,794,628** in the 2023/24 HNB.

Appendix A sets out the detail of the budgets included within the High Needs Block, and the reasons for the pressure on the 2023-24 HNB budget.

5. Appendices

Appendix A – High Needs Budget detail

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). In 2018/19 pre 16 resource unit place funding was reduced from £10,000 to £6,000 per place, and each pupil within the unit was 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 2023-24; no additional funding is made available.

1.3 In total the allocated planned places in 2022-23 are 747. Required place numbers are still being calculated for 2023-23, so the total planned places and total budget requirement shown below may change.

1.4 As it is not possible to request increased planned place funding for maintained schools, any increase in place funding needed which is over and above the number of places set out below has been allowed for in the relevant top up budgets, creating additional pressure on those budgets.

TABLE 1 - Place Funding Budget	2022/23 Budget			2023/24 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	448	286	2,860,000	0
Special Schools post 16 (90546) –	79	790,000		79	790,000	0
Resource Units Maintained – pre 16 (90584)	35	242,000	32	35	246,000	0
Special Schools and PRU Teachers Pay and Pension		312,050	n/a		312,050	0
Resource Units Academies – pre 16 (DSG top slice)	99	606,000	106	102	606,000	0
Mainstream Maintained post 16 (90551) –	5	44,000	12	6	44,000	0
Mainstream Academies post 16 (DSG top slice) –	31	186,000	32	30	186,000	0
Further Education	133	798,000		143	798,000	0
PRU Place Funding (90320)	66	660,000	84	66	660,000	0
TOTAL	747	6,498,050		747	6,502,050	0

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 2022/23 and the estimate for 2023/24.

TABLE 2 Top Up Budgets	2021/22 Budget		2022/23 Budget			2023/24	Difference 22/23 budget & 23/24 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	4,403,120	4,985,051	4,924,490	5,345,495	421,005	5,464,490	+540,000
Non WBC special schools (90548)	1,324,500	955,003	620,810	550,523	-70,287	430,659	-190,151
Non WBC free schools (90554)	0	0	331,700	518,097	186,397	549,403	+217,703
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	314,000	321,587	314,000	317,410	3,410	320,630	+6,630
Resource Units Academies (90026)	1,113,300	930,495	1,000,000	985,450	-14,550	976,072	-23,928
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	170,540	207,271	180,640	150,990	-29,650	119,852	-60,788
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	818,660	974,686	850,000	1,054,109	204,109	1,087,600	+237,600
Mainstream Academies (90622)	423,560	580,039	510,000	548,920	38,920	548,920	+38,920
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	160,510	174,581	161,780	175,220	13,440	180,000	+18,220
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	1,007,880	851,541	1,114,000	1,027,890	-86,110	1,061,456	-52,544
Independent Special Schools (90579)	3,535,280	3,072,415	4,656,200	4,298,250	-357,950	5,113,279	+457,079
Further Education (90580)	1,437,800	1,175,012	1,016,940	1,104,540	87,600	1,104,539	+87,599
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	40,000	51,609	42,000	61,510	19,510	65,000	+23,000
New SEMH Provision at Theale	0	0	775,390	775,390	0	889,000	+113,610
TOTAL	14,749,150	14,279,289	16,497,950	16,913,794	415,844	17,910,900	+1,412,950

2.2 There will be a saving in 2023-24 in the budget for non West Berkshire special schools, ie. special schools maintained by other Local Authorities. This is partly due to lack of availability of places in other Local Authorities' special schools.

- 2.3 There is also a saving in the budget for resourced units in non West Berkshire schools and in West Berkshire academies as a result of some students leaving this type of provision.
- 2.4 In addition there will be a saving in 2023-24 in the non maintained special school budget, due to placements in this type of provision decreasing slightly, (although there is a pressure on the independent special school placement budget).
- 2.5 However, all other top up budgets are under pressure resulting in a budget requirement in 2023-24 in excess of this year's budget allocation by £1,412,950.
- 2.6 It should be noted that £889,000 of this is accounted for by the new secondary SEMH provision, The Castle@Theale, which opened in September 2022.
- 2.7 The top up budgets under most pressure are as follows:
- Maintained special schools
 - Independent special schools
 - Mainstream school EHCPs
 - Free special schools
- 2.8 The predictions of cost for specialist placements in 2023-24 take in to account existing pupils, additional 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 2023-24. The figures assume a middle ground between the best case scenario and the worst case scenario (financially) in terms of Tribunal outcomes.

2.9 **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. Another factor in this pressure is that whilst numbers of children placed at Brookfields has not gone up significantly due to restrictions on space, the proportion of West Berkshire pupils on roll has increased due to increasing numbers of children in West Berkshire mainstream schools needing special school placements, and therefore priority being given to West Berkshire pupils over Reading pupils. In addition, two new classrooms are planned at Brookfields for September 2023 / January 2024 in order to help meet increasing demand and the cost of these additional placements has been factored in to the 2023-24 budget.

2.10 **Independent special schools**

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 22-23 and so have only incurred part year costs this year, but will incur full year costs in 23-24. In addition there are a number of anticipated new placements for children with a variety of needs including SEMH / Autism / EBSA, but also some very high cost children whose needs

can no longer be met in local or other LA maintained special schools or at home. (Some of these will be joint funded placements with Social Care or Health).

The forecast includes some cases where independent placements have not been agreed by the LA, but parents are appealing to the SEND Tribunal which could direct such placements if parental appeals are upheld. The number of Tribunal cases is increasing.

Another factor in this cost increase is fee increases related to the rise in the cost of living.

The reason a higher budget has been set in spite of a predicted underspend in the current financial year is that some children for whom specialist placements are required have not been placed due to lack of placement availability, but it is anticipated that they will be placed in 2023-24.

2.11 Mainstream top ups (maintained and academies)

This increase reflects an increasing number of EHCPs in mainstream schools, in line with the overall increase in EHCPs. The total number of EHCPs maintained by West Berkshire has increased from 1163 in September 2021 to 1300 in September 2022, an increase of 12%. There has also been a shift towards the higher banding rates, reflecting increasing complexity of need of children in mainstream schools, plus a number of high level support packages which have been put in place to try to prevent specialist placements.

It should be noted that EHCP top up values for mainstream schools have not been increased since 2013. The budget proposed for 2022-23 does not allow for any increase in EHCP bandings, but the HFG / Schools Forum may wish to consider whether it would like to increase these values.

2.12 Free special schools

The free special schools used by West Berkshire Council are primarily schools for children with autism. These schools tend to be used for children whose needs cannot be met by our own resourced ASD provision in mainstream schools. Fees are generally lower than those of independent special schools. This budget also funds placements in special academies.

2.13 Further Education

This increase reflects two students at Newbury College with support packages which are costly in relation to other students with EHCPs at local FE Colleges, but which are more cost effective than placements in specialist FE Colleges. In addition, there is one expensive specialist FE placement which was ordered by the SEND Tribunal.

2.14 New Secondary SEMH Provision in Theale

The HFG /Forum will be aware from previous reports that planning started in 2019 for a new 42 place provision for young people with complex emotional needs who may have a diagnosis of autism. This provision, The Castle@Theale, opened in September 2022, managed by The Castle School and based on the site of the old Theale Primary School. The provision has 12 pupils on roll currently, rising gradually to 42 over approximately 5 years. A revenue budget for the provision has been developed by the Local Authority in partnership with The Castle School and based on an agreed staffing model. Unit costs will inevitably be disproportionately high in the early years of opening due to low numbers, but will reduce over time to a level which is significantly lower than the average cost of an equivalent external placement. (approximately £44K compared to £82K). All pupils in this provision would have needed placements in non maintained or independent special schools if this provision had not opened.

3. PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (PRU) – STATUTORY

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

TABLE 3	2021/22 Budget		2022/23 Budget			2023/24	
PRU Budgets	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	Difference 22/23 budget & 23/24 prediction
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	821,920	861,561	830,140	830,140	0	861,000	+30,860
PRU EHCP SEMH Placements (90628)	571,450	755,402	767,020	980,500	213,480	920,420	+153,400
Non WBC PRU Top Up Funding (90626)	0	0	0		0		0
TOTAL	1,393,370	1,616,964	1,597,160	1,810,640	213,480	1,781,420	+184,260

3.2 The current year budget was based on the previous year's forecast. Schools Forum agreed to a 50% contribution from schools for pupils that they placed. Heads have requested that this contribution remains. Permanent exclusions are funded 100% by the High Needs Block less the average pupil led funding contribution recovered from schools. The estimate for 23/24 PRU Top Up Funding is based on the profile of pupils at iCollege 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 if they are not able to remain in their mainstream schools. A new provision for pupils with EHCPs was set up in autumn 2019, The Pod, and a further Pod Plus provision was set up in September 2021. These placements are usually more cost effective than independent and non-maintained special school placements. The budget increase includes provision for additional planned places not funded by the ESFA.

4. OTHER STATUTORY SERVICES

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

TABLE 4	2021/22 Budget		2022/23 Budget			2023/24	
Other Statutory Services	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	Difference 22/23 budget & 23/24 prediction
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	150,470	196,912	167,910	220,257	52,347	220,257	+52,347
Sensory Impairment (90290)	247,860	229,972	243,900	251,820	7,920	282,338	+38,438
SEN Commissioned Provision (90577) Engaging Potential	584,480	572,815	584,480	618,750	34,270	636,216	+51,736

Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	15,000	8,090	15,000	15,000	0	15,000	0
Therapy Services (90295)	314,500	335,164	323,820	342,890	19,070	469,696	+145,876
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	28,240	21,889	29,310	29,310	0	30,920	+1,610
Medical Home Tuition (90282)	172,730	151,500	386,090	258,090	-128,000	389,190	+3,100
Hospital Tuition (90610)	39,280	53,847	39,950	20,150	-19,800	39,940	-10
SEND Strategy (DSG) (90281)	68,700	51,381	60,740	60,740	0	65,800	+5,060
TOTAL	1,621,260	1,621,570	1,851,200	1,817,007	-34,193	2,149,357	+298,157

4.2 Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) / Personal Budgets

4.2.1 This budget historically supported 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. There are now few ABA programmes funded and this budget (which will be renamed in 2023-24) supports mainly the costs of children with EHC Plans accessing other bespoke packages where this is the most appropriate and cost effective way of meeting their needs, including SEN Personal Budgets. This budget needs to increase due to increasing numbers of children with SEN Personal Budgets. However, it should be noted that SEN Personal Budgets can be a very cost effective alternative to non-maintained and independent special schools, in particular for children who are emotionally based school avoiders, for whom they are increasingly being requested by parents.

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. The budget will need to be higher next year due to an increase in numbers and also one blind child requiring a high package of support to access mainstream school.

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. An in year increase of approximately £33K was agreed to this contract in 22-23 due to costings not having been revised for some years. The contract ends in August 2023, with the option to extend for a further two years. The contractor has the opportunity to renegotiate the contract at that point and we are allowing for a further increase in cost based on the contractor's inability to recruit and the need to increase staff ratios to meet the needs of the current cohort. Even at the anticipated higher cost for 2023-24, the unit cost of a place at £45,444 represents good value for money compared to other independent schools for SEMH.

4.5 Equipment for SEN Pupils

4.5.1 This budget is 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. It is recommended that the budget stays the same for 2023-24.

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 or physiotherapy written in to their EHC Plans as an educational need.

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 The HFG / Schools Forum will be aware from previous reports that this service is in the process of being retendered and that costs will rise due to more children with EHCPs who have therapy needs, and therefore an increased caseload, the need to provide therapies for The Castle@Theale and the need to provide capacity for therapists to assist the Local Authority in defending cases which go to the SEND Tribunal.

4.7 Elective Home Education (EHE) Monitoring

Elective Home Education (EHE) Monitoring

4.7.1 There is a statutory duty for Local Authorities to monitor arrangements for EHE made by parents and ensure that all pupils are receiving suitable education. The EHE monitoring sits within the Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service. The Elective Home Education Officer is 0.6fte. EHE numbers have been growing, both locally and nationally over recent years but since September 2020 there has been a steep rise in numbers due to COVID-19. The number of new EHE pupils continue to be a concern; there were an additional 30 new families opting for EHE last academic year which has a direct impact on capacity and is going to be reviewed this year but is likely to result in a request to increase capacity and therefore budget.

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 budget was increased in 2022-23 due to the need to ensure that the Local Authority's duties towards children who cannot attend school for health reasons are fully met. Savings this year are based on recruitment delays. The increase in provision to meet section 19 pupils falls within this service currently and is also on the rise due to increasing mental health issues for our children and young people and prolonged waiting lists for support. The majority of cases are related to ASD, anxiety and mental health preventing access to school.

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 2023-24 budget remains the same as 2022-23.

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

5.1 **Table 5** details the non-statutory service budgets for 2021-22, 2022-23, and estimates for 2023-24.

5.2 The table shows the budget for these services in 2023/24 assuming that the services continue and there are no changes to staffing levels.

5.3 Table 5 also includes ongoing funding for the “invest to save” initiatives agreed in 2021-22. The impact of these services is set out in a separate report on invest to save initiatives.

TABLE 5 Non Statutory Services	2021/22 Budget		2022/23 Budget			2023/24	Difference 22/23 budget & 23/24 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	122,000	122,000	135,740	135,740	0	161,690	+25,950
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
Cognition and Learning Team(90280)	328,100	324,416	334,140	329,140	-5,000	346,350	+12,210
ASD Advisory Service (90830)	170,430	94,397	174,080	174,080	0	174,080	0
ASD Additional High Level TA Support (90830)	59,540	59,540	61,560	61,560	0	62,580	+1,020
Therapeutic Thinking post (90372)	54,300	53,272	55,900	55,900	0	59,370	+3,470
Vulnerable Children (90961)	179,400	168,232	179,400	179,400	0	179,400	0
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	58,375	57,817	62,505	62,505	0	64,405	+1,900
Dingley's Promise (90581)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	0

Invest to save projects 2021-22							
ASD Fund - Additional support (90830)			52,690	32,690	-20,000	52,690	0
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) (WBC led)	121,730	65,623	123,840	123,840	0	123,840	0
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) (school led)	99,860	99,585	110,966	110,966	0	110,966	0
Invest to save projects 2022-23							
0.4fte additional support EDIT team			26,390	26,390	0	0	-26,390
0.4fte additional support Speech and Language			31,324	15,662	-15,662	0	-31,324
SEMH Practitioner			41,490	41,490	0	41,490	0
Extension of i-college			90,000	90,000	0	90,000	0
TOTAL	1,387,625	1,238,771	1,621,225	1,580,563	-40,662	1,608,061	-13,164

5.4 Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)

5.4.1 The LALs 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.

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

5.5 Specialist Inclusion Support Service

5.5.1 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.

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

5.6 PRU Outreach

5.6.1 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.

5.7 Cognition and Learning Team

5.7.1 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.

5.7.2 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.

5.7.3 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.

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

5.8 **ASD Advisory Service**

5.8.1 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.

5.8.2 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.

5.8.3 The increase in cost represents teachers' salary increases, pension and NI.

5.9 **Vulnerable Children**

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

5.9.2 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.

5.9.3 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. This increase was further extended in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and was agreed as a permanent addition to the HNB budget, along with the Therapeutic Thinking post.

5.10 **Early Development and Inclusion Team**

5.10.1 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.

- 5.10.2 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.
- 5.10.3 The service is currently supporting over 100 children. It has been reduced in size in recent years from 3.4 to 1.7 staff. The service has a waiting list due to increased demand and reduced capacity.

5.11 Dingley's Promise

- 5.11.1 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 years settings, where experience and expertise in SEND can vary greatly. Parents are able to take up their early years 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.
- 5.11.2 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.

5.12 Invest to Save projects

- 5.12.1 A separate report addresses the Invest to Save projects agreed in 2021-22, (and carried forward in to 2022-23), the EBSA Project and Autism Fund, and recommends that these be incorporated in to the 2023-24 budgets.
- 5.12.2 Invest to Save projects in 2022-23 to the value of £300,200 included a 0.4 FTE posts in the EDIT Team, the early years training project, an additional SEMH practitioner and additional PRU places. These projects have been running for less than a year and have not yet been evaluated.
- 5.12.3 It was not possible to get staff in place for the early years training project until September 2022 and therefore the project will need to be funded until July 2023. It is not anticipated that project funding will continue beyond that point.
- 5.12.4 The additional capacity in the EDIT Team has been extremely worthwhile (impact report to follow in summer 2023) in reducing waiting times for the service and providing earlier intervention. However, given the pressures on the HNB it is not anticipated that it will be possible for this funding to continue in 2023-24.
- 5.12.5 The SEMH Practitioner funded in 22-23 will not have been in post for 12 months by the end of the financial year and will not have been evaluated, so it is proposed that funding for this post continues in 23-24 pending full evaluation.
- 5.12.6 The funding allocated in 22-23 for additional PRU places is shown as carried forward in to 2023-24 pending further discussion.