

High Needs Block Budget 2020/21			
Report being considered by:	Schools Forum on 9 th December 2019		
Report Author:	Ian Pearson, Jane Seymour, Michelle Sancho, Linda Curtis		
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 2019/20 and the position known so far for 2020/21, including the likely shortfall.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To note the predicted shortfall and request a further report on options for savings together with options for invest to save projects which would reduce costs.

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; 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, mainly, but not entirely due to the change in age range up to 25 years.

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.

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 Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Appendix A show where the predicted 2020-21 costs exceed 2019-20 budgets.

3.6 In 2020-21, the Government has increased in Local Authorities' HNB budgets. In West Berkshire's case, the HNB budget will increase from £20,070,067 to £21,595,616, an increase of £1,525,616 or 7.6%. There will also be an in year import / export adjustment which is difficult to estimate at this stage. The current year import / export adjustment was £30,000.

3.7 The net shortfall in the 2020-21 HNB budget, is **£3,158,616**. This includes a predicted 19/20 overspend of **£2,050,052**.

3.8 The increase can be explained as follows:

- Overspend of £521,000 in 2018-19, carried forward
- Deficit budget of £1.6M set in 2019-20, due to increased pressure in a range of areas including maintained special schools, non maintained special schools, resourced units, EHCPs in mainstream schools, FE College placements, PRUs and children with EHCPs in PRUs.
- Additional pressures in 20-21, over and above the deficit budget set in 2019-20, 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.

3.9 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

3.10 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. It is likely that in the short term (starting in 2020-21) costs will actually increase whilst new provision is being set up, as there will be an element of double funding whilst new provision grows before out of area placements start to reduce.

3.11 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 2019/20 and 2020/21 is set out in Table 1. This will continue to be refined over the next few months, particularly in relation to the largest variable element, which is top up funding. 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 2019 census, and import/export adjustments based on the January 2020 census and February 2020 ILR.

TABLE 1	2019/20 Budget £	2019/20 Forecast £	2020/21 Estimate £
Place Funding	6,016,000	6,016,000	6,055,000
Top Up Funding	12,119,960	11,852,081	12,660,740
PRU Funding (top ups only)	1,089,100	1,350,740	1,396,630
Other Statutory Services	1,501,180	1,504,542	1,487,247
Non Statutory Services	801,470	778,470	924,610
Support Service Recharges	127,286	127,286	180,020
Total Expenditure	21,654,996	21,629,119	22,704,247

HNB DSG Allocation	-20,070,067	-20,100,067	-21,595,683
In year overspend	1,584,929	1,529,052	1,108,564
HNB DSG Overspend from previous year	521,000	521,000	2,050,052
Total cumulative deficit	2,105,929	2,050,052	3,158,616

4.3 There is a forecast shortfall of **£1,108,564** in the 2020/21 HNB which may change as the budgets continue to be finalised.

4.4 Proposals for savings, together with proposals for invest to save projects, will be brought to the next meeting of the HFG / Schools' Forum. Any savings are likely to have to come from non statutory services, though the impact on statutory budgets will need to be taken in to consideration.

4.5 It is proposed that a consultation takes place with schools on whether to transfer 0.5% of the Schools' Block to the HNB.

4.6 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

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 2020-21; no additional funding is made available.
- 1.3 Requests have been made for an increase of 17 places in academies and FE, but this is offset by a reduction of 13 FE places, so the net increase is 4. Further detail is given in a separate report on planned places.
- 1.4 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. The shortfall in planned places for children with EHCPs attending West Berkshire maintained special schools or PRUs, so this funding is taken from the maintained special school and PRU EHCP top up budgets, creating additional pressure in those areas.

TABLE 1 - Place Funding Budget	2019/20 Budget			2020/21 Budget		
	No. of Places	£	Current No. of Pupils	Proposed No. of Places	£	Difference in number
Special Schools pre 16 (90540) –	286	2,860,000	405	286	2,860,000	0
Special Schools post 16 (90546) –	79	527,000		79	790,000	0
Special Schools –post 16 (DSG top slice)		263,000				
Resource Units Maintained – pre 16 (90584)	35	234,000	30	25	230,000	0
Resource Units Academies – pre 16 (DSG top slice)	94	628,000	88	112	664,000	8
Mainstream Maintained – post 16	5	16,000	7	5	30,000	0
Mainstream Academies – post 16 (DSG top slice)	14	82,000	14	16	96,000	2
Further Education	139	746,000	135	133	725,000	-6
PRU Place Funding (90320)	66	660,000	72	66	660,000	0
TOTAL	718	6,016,000		722	6,055,000	4

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 2019/20 and the estimate for 2020/21.

TABLE 2 Top Up Budgets	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Difference 19/20 budget & 20/21 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	3,300,420	3,383,249	3,463,450	3,751,180	287,730	3,990,880	+527,430
Non WBC special schools (90548)	1,098,070	1,009,156	1,065,960	987,538	-78,422	1,096,480	+30,520
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	293,020	274,236	270,350	309,086	38,736	330,370	+60,020
Resource Units Academies (90026)	854,270	822,634	946,530	825,812	-120,718	948,280	+1,750
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	107,000	126,702	143,580	139,162	-4,418	125,640	-17,940
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	541,560	658,073	667,330	769,750	102,420	724,320	+56,990
Mainstream Academies (90622)	185,170	247,075	267,460	344,100	76,640	377,920	+110,460
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	75,000	78,343	73,030	92,075	19,045	70,590	-2,440
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	840,100	747,940	1,030,380	996,555	-33,825	1,101,910	+71,530
Independent Special Schools (90579)	2,436,400	2,218,567	2,683,020	2,369,690	-313,330	2,546,790	-136,230
Further Education (90580)	1,396,140	1,270,010	1,408,870	1,167,133	-241,737	1,247,560	-161,310
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	100,000	83,609	100,000	100,000	0	100,000	0
TOTAL	11,227,150	10,919,594	12,119,960	11,852,081	-267,879	12,660,740	+540,780

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

- West Berkshire maintained special schools
- Mainstream top ups (academies)

- Non maintained special schools
- Resourced units in maintained schools
- Mainstream top ups (maintained)
- Non West Berkshire special schools

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

- Further Education
- Independent special schools
- Resourced units in Non West Berkshire schools

2.4 The predictions of cost for 2020-21 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 2020/21. The figures assume a middle ground between the best case scenario and the worst case scenario (financially) in terms of Tribunal outcomes.

2.5 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.

2.6 Mainstream top ups (academies)

There is pressure on the budgets for EHCPs in mainstream schools (both maintained and academies). This relates to an increase in the average cost of an EHCP in a mainstream school, together with an increase in overall numbers of EHCPs. There was a significant increase in the number of EHCPs issued in the 2018-19 academic year. There are robust systems in place to manage demand, and criteria for EHC assessments have not changed, so the increase suggests an increase in the numbers of children with significant needs.

The total numbers of EHCPs has increased as shown below since implementation of SEND Reforms in 2014. This represents an increase of 33% in just under 6 years.

Jan 2014	770
Jan 2015	751
Jan 2016	822
Jan 2017	897
Jan 2018	892
Jan 2019	912
Nov 2019	1026

2.7 Non maintained special schools

This increase in this budget is predominately due to a very ill child who has returned to the area and will need a specialist placement.

The majority of placements made in non maintained special schools continue to be for children with SEMH and ASD, plus a smaller number of HI placements.

2.8 Resourced units in maintained schools

This pressure relates to some pupils in resourced units requiring higher funding bands due to the complexity of their needs.

2.9 Mainstream top ups (maintained)

There is pressure on the budgets for EHCPs in mainstream schools (both maintained and academies). See 2.6 above. There has been a notable increase in the number of children with EHCPs who are of nursery age.

2.10 Non West Berkshire special schools

There is a current underspend in this budget due to pupils moving out of Northern House School to join I-College and 2 pupils predicted to go to Thames Valley School who have now been placed at The Pod (New I-College provision).

There will however be a pressure on this budget for next year due to 3 pupils requiring places at Holybrook School (SEMH) from September 2020, 4 other pupils in mainstream moving to SEMH provision and 1 to TVS. The cost of these additional placements is offset by leavers but there is still a net increase.

2.11 Further Education

There is a predicted underspend on this budget in the current financial year. The budget for 2019-20 was based on the number of students with EHCPs attending FE Colleges in 2018-19, but numbers in 2019-20 are down on the previous academic year. It is not entirely clear why this is the case, but appears to be partly due to more young people moving in to employment. In addition, one student left an Independent Specialist College placement (ISP) after 2 years of a 3 years course, generating a significant saving. One student will be leaving an ISP early at Christmas who was expected to stay until the end of the academic year.

The predicted costs for 20/21 are based on current numbers and represent a significant reduction in predicted expenditure.

It should be noted, however, that this budget is volatile as it covers young adults who have the right to leave education should they wish, sometimes unexpectedly.

Students with high level needs can also opt to re-enter education at any time up to the age of 25 years. In addition, a change to the ESFA funding guidance means that the host Local Authority is responsible financially for place funding for students over and above the agreed number of planned places who are placed by other Local Authorities. It is not possible to predict what the impact of this will be in 2020-21. Any additional costs are reimbursed through the import / export adjustment but not until the following financial year.

2.12 Independent special schools (ISS)

There is a predicted underspend in this budget caused by a number of factors including delays in sourcing suitable placements in some cases, placements being made at Engaging Potential rather than independent special schools, one pupil moving to Elected Home Education, some negotiated reductions in fees and some children moving out of area.

It is anticipated that costs in 2020-21 will also be lower than the 2019-20 budget, although the discrepancy will not be as great as the current underspend. Provision needs to be made for 2 pupils with ASD potentially moving into private schools (one is a Tribunal case), 1 pupil with ASD seeking an independent SPLD special school

placement via Tribunal, 2 pupils with ASD moving in to ISS placements and 2 pupils with ASD in LA special schools potentially moving in to residential ISS (one case is via Tribunal).

2.13 Resourced units in Non West Berkshire schools

Taking in to account existing placements and proposed new placements, costs in 2020-21 will be lower than the 2019-20 budget due to some pupils changing placement.

3. PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (PRU) – STATUTORY

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

TABLE 3 PRU Budgets	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Difference 19/20 budget & 20/21 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	542,950	800,225	757,700	847,980	90,280	818,400	+60,700
PRU EHCP SEMH Placements (90628)	0	223,699	331,400	502,760	171,360	578,230	+246,830
Non WBC PRU Top Up Funding (90626)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	542,950	1,023,924	1,089,100	1,350,740	261,640	1,396,630	+307,530

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. Further details can be found in a separate report. 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 20/21 PRU Top Up Funding is based on the profile of pupils at I-College in the summer term. A more up to date figure may be available after the autumn term figures are known.

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. The top up and place costs have been allowed for in the 2020-21 estimate as new planned places for maintained provision cannot be made available. 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	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Difference 19/20 budget & 20/21 prediction
Other Statutory Services	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	75,000	116,192	119,120	168,920	49,800	113,090	-6,030
Sensory Impairment (90290)	175,750	241,928	236,000	231,320	-4,680	227,587	-8,413
SEN Commissioned Provision (90577)	456,000	487,772	527,150	527,150	0	539,800	+12,650
Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	10,000	11,954	15,000	7,000	-8,000	15,000	0
Therapy Services (90295)	240,760	276,331	261,470	261,470	0	261,470	0
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	27,990	22,801	28,240	25,240	-3,000	28,240	0
Home Tuition Service (90315)	245,000	230,567	102,080	102,080	0	0	-102,080
Medical Home Tuition (90282)	0	0	119,920	119,920	0	205,000	+85,080
Hospital Tuition (90610)	45,000	37,390	36,000	36,000	0	36,000	0
SEND Strategy (DSG) (90281)	0	0	56,200	25,442	-30,758	61,060	4,860
TOTAL	1,275,500	1,424,935	1,501,180	1,504,542	3,362	1,487,247	-13,933

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 a small number of children with ASD and high levels of anxiety who were school refusers and required a bespoke package to support elective home education provided by parents through Personal Budgets.

4.2.4 The predicted cost for 2020-21 is slightly lower than the current budget, in spite of the overspend in 2019-20, because two particularly large packages of support have recently ceased.

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 slightly lower next year due to a small increase in numbers of children requiring support.

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 reduced income for young people placed by other Local Authorities and an increase in 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 is not fully spent this year but there are likely to be more equipment requests in the final 4 to 5 months of the financial so it is recommended that the budget stays the same for 2020-21.

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.

4.6.3 It is anticipated that there will be a small percentage increase in this budget in 2020-21 to reflect staff pay increases, but this information has not yet been made available by the service provider.

4.7 Elective Home Education Monitoring

4.7.1 The Elective Home Education monitoring sits within the Education Welfare and Safeguarding Service. There is a statutory duty to monitor arrangements for EHE made by parents. Elective Home Education numbers are growing, both locally and nationally. In August 2019 the part time teacher who was in post resigned, which gave the opportunity to evaluate the post and consequently advertise for an EHE

Officer to work for three rather than two days. The current year forecast is a £3,000 saving, due to the change of staff terms and conditions.

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 next year's budget already agreed by Schools' Forum. £23K saving has already been taken in this financial year and there will be a £17K saving in 2020-21 as a result of transferring this service in house.

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 2020-21 budget remains the same as 2019-20.

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.

5 NON STATUTORY Services

5.10 **Table 5** details the non-statutory service budgets for 2018-19, 2019-20, and estimates for 2020-21. 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 2020/21 assuming that the services continue and there are no changes to staffing levels.

5.12 Table 5 also includes two proposals for invest to save initiatives; 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	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	Difference 19/20 budget & 20/21 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	82,400	93,800	98,400	98,400	0	116,200	+17,800
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
TABLE 5	2018/19 Budget		2019/20 Budget			2020/21	
Non Statutory Services	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 7)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	Difference 19/20 budget & 20/21 prediction
Early Years Inclusion Fund (90238) moved to EY Block	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Needs Support Team (90280)	319,170	309,706	325,660	302,660	-23,000	309,050	-16,610
ASD Advisory Service (90830)	141,550	140,063	146,210	146,240	0	150,160	+3,950
Vulnerable Children (90961)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	110,000	+60,000
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	0	40,000	0
Dingley's Promise (90581)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	0
Therapeutic Thinking	0	0	0	0	0	58,000	+58,000
TOTAL	774,320	774,769	801,470	778,470	-23,000	924,610	123,140

5.13 Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)

5.13.1 This budget funds the primary LALs at Theale and Winchcombe schools. The LALs provide intensive literacy support for primary children with severe specific literacy difficulties. 48 places per year are available across the two LALs.

5.13.2 The budget was reduced in 2018-19 when charging for LAL places, at 50% of the real cost of the place, was introduced. Since charging was introduced, take up of places fell from 48 to 33 in 2018-19 and 26 in 2019-20.

5.13.3 A number of schools have stated that they would like to purchase LAL places but cannot afford to do so. Children who do not access LAL places due to cost maybe more likely to require an EHCP, with associated costs, and are likely to present at secondary school with very low literacy levels.

5.13.4 The HFG / Schools Forum may wish to consider restoring the LAL budget to its original figure of £116,200 and removing charging. Further information can be brought to the next meeting to inform a decision on this issue.

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

5.6.1 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.

5.16 SEN Pre School Children

5.16.1 This budget provides one to one support to enable children with SEN to access non maintained and voluntary pre-school settings.

5.17 Cognition and Learning Team

5.17.1 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.

5.17.2 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.

5.17.3 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.

5.18 ASD Advisory Service

5.18.1 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.

5.18.2 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.

5.19 Vulnerable Children

5.19.1 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.

5.19.2 The budget has gradually been reduced from £120K over the past few years. This is a well used resource that helps schools support vulnerable pupils with complex needs. It is proposed that £60K is added to the fund in 2020-21 to increase the budget to £110K. 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.

5.20 Early Development and Inclusion Team

5.20.1 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.

5.20.2 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.

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

5.11 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 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.

5.11.2 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.

6 Proposal to fund Therapeutic Thinking Officer

6.1 Over 120 school staff and West Berkshire employees have attended engagement days which helped them to understand how to support children and young people in schools in a trauma informed way. In addition, over 70 school staff and LA employees attended three day train the trainer training in order to upskill themselves to deliver training in therapeutic thinking in their own settings. Other local authorities that have adopted a similar approach have seen impressive outcomes. For example, one local authority found that in schools where head teachers were trained as trainers there was a 60% reduction in fixed term exclusions, an 89.5% reduction in exclusion days and no permanent exclusions. This was achieved within a year.

6.2 Both the engagement day training and the 3 day training have been evaluated positively. The evaluation is outlined below.

6.3 The Therapeutic Thinking Invest to Save Project have had a significant impact on staff skills and reported practice. In order to sustain change across West Berkshire I recommend that HNB funds a 3 year fixed term post of Therapeutic Thinking Officer to lead network meetings for school leads, develop policy and practice within West Berkshire and in schools and to continue to deliver the engagement and train the trainer courses.

6.4 Some work has been done to start implementation of Therapeutic Thinking but progress has been severely limited by having no dedicated capacity to embed this approach.

6.5 In order to ensure that therapeutic thinking can be moved forward in a timely way, it is proposed that a new Therapeutic Thinking Officer is recruited, funded from High Needs Block. In order to attract candidates of suitable calibre, and in order to maintain momentum on Therapeutic Thinking projects, it is suggested that the post should be offered on a temporary contract for 3 years initially.

6.6 The post is likely to be a Band K post which equates to a salary range from £36,876 to £44,632. Assuming an appointment at the mid-point of the scale, and taking on costs and start-up equipment purchase into account, the estimated annual cost of the post would be £58K.

6.7 Without this post there is a serious risk that the potential of the Therapeutic Thinking to realise savings in the HNB will not be realised. It is difficult to be precise about the savings which could be achieved through creation of new provision. However, the following should provide a broad illustration of potential savings from one of the projects in the strategy.

6.8 A reduction in permanent exclusions by 25% maintained for three years would equate to approximately 17 less permanent exclusions in that time period which would result in a saving of £340K. Some students from this group go on to be placed in schools which cost an average of £62,000 per place per year, therefore there is the potential to save £428K over 3 years if for example 2 of the 17 students spend one year in such provision.