

High Needs Block Budget 2022/23		
Report being considered by:	Schools Forum 6 th December 2021	
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Item for:	Discussion	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 2021/22 and the position as far as it can be predicted for 2022/23, including the likely shortfall.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To agree the overall HNB budget for 2022-23. 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, 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. 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. 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.

3.4 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 2020-21 and 2021-22 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 2022-23 costs exceed 2021-22 budgets.

3.7 The net shortfall in the 2022-23 HNB budget, is **£5,835,939**. This includes a predicted 21/22 overspend of £1,361,301 and carried forward overspends of £2,327,100 from previous years. Without the carried forward overspends, the shortfall in 22-23 would be **£2,147,538**.

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 2021/22 and 2022/23 is set out in Table 1. The figures are based on current and anticipated numbers of high needs pupils. They assume no change in top up funding rates for EHCPs in West Berkshire schools.

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 2021 census, and import/export adjustments based on the January 2021 census and February 2021 ILR.

TABLE 1	2021/22 Budget £	2021/22 Forecast £	2022/23 Estimate £
Place Funding	6,141,000	6,196,000	6,172,000
Top Up Funding	14,749,150	14,620,890	16,220,150
PRU Funding (top ups only)	1,393,370	1,441,760	1,597,160
Other Statutory Services	1,621,260	1,700,122	1,824,440
Non Statutory Services	1,385,814	1,387,625	1,321,055
Support Service Recharges	188,790	188,790	191,506
Total Expenditure	25,479,384	25,535,187	27,326,311

HNB DSG Allocation	-23,625,318	-23,625,318	-25,178,773
0.25% Schools Block Transfer Existing Invest to save projects	-274,284	-274,284	
0.25% Schools Block Transfer New Invest to save projects	-274,284	-274,284	
In year overspend	1,305,498	1,361,301	2,147,538
HNB DSG Overspend from previous year	2,780,880	2,327,100	3,688,401
Total cumulative deficit	4,086,306	3,688,401	5,835,939

4.3 There is a forecast shortfall of **£2,147,538** in the 2022/23 HNB.

Appendix A sets out the detail of the budgets included within the High Needs Block, and the reasons for the pressure on the 2022-23 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 2022-23; no additional funding is made available.
- 1.3 In total the allocated planned places in 2020-21 are 734 and for 2022-23 they will be 733. There have been some increases and decreases to place funding which can be changed (academies and FE colleges) with an overall net reduction of 1 place. (see Table 1 below).
- 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	2021/22 Budget			2022/23 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	440	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	31	35	226,000	0
Resource Units Academies pre 16 (DSG top slice) –	99	622,000	111	102	638,000	3
Mainstream Maintained post 16 (90551) –	5	38,000	11	6	44,000	1
Mainstream Academies post 16 (DSG top slice) –	31	186,000	35	30	180,000	-1
Further Education	133	798,000		129	774,000	-4
PRU Place Funding (90320)	66	660,000	84	66	660,000	0
TOTAL	734	6,196,000		733	£6,172,000	-1

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 2021/22 and the estimate for 2022/23.

TABLE 2 Top Up Budgets	2020/21 Budget		2021/22 Budget			2022/23	Difference 21/22 budget & 22/23 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 6)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Special Schools Maintained (90539)	3,986,360	4,014,247	4,403,120	4,675,990	272,870	4,924,490	+521,370
Non WBC special schools (90548)	1,194,300	862,361	1,324,500	1,174,500	-150,000	919,660	-404,840
Resource Units Maintained (90617)	313,650	285,803	314,000	293,220	-20,780	314,000	0
Resource Units Academies (90026)	948,280	1,016,637	1,113,300	1,005,660	-107,640	1,000,000	-113,300
Resource Units Non WBC (90618)	130,600	191,997	170,540	198,640	28,100	180,640	+10,100
Mainstream Maintained (90621)	779,450	790,047	818,660	911,190	92,530	850,000	+31,340
Mainstream Academies (90622)	389,600	412,090	423,560	498,580	75,020	510,000	+86,440
Mainstream Non WBC (90624)	70,590	138,703	160,510	219,480	58,970	146,810	-13,700
Non Maintained Special Schools (90575)	1,068,200	986,016	1,007,880	936,240	-71,640	1,116,300	+108,420
Independent Special Schools (90579)	2,797,000	2,636,088	3,535,280	3,479,590	-55,690	4,335,930	+800,650
Further Education (90580)	1,087,730	993,861	1,437,800	1,187,800	-250,000	1,104,930	-332,870
Disproportionate HN Pupils (90627)	100,000	33,550	40,000	40,000	0	42,000	+2,000
New SEMH Provision at Theale	-	-	-	-	-	775,390	+775,390
TOTAL	12,865,760	12,361,399	14,749,150	14,620,890	-128,260	16,220,150	+1,471,000

2.2 There have been savings on Non West Berkshire special schools (placements in Free special schools and other Local Authorities' maintained special schools), and also on placements in FE Colleges, amounting to over £700K.

2.3 However, a number of other top up budgets are under pressure resulting in a budget requirement in 2022-23 in excess of this year's budget allocation by circa £1.4M.

2.4 It should be noted that £775,390 of this is accounted for by the new secondary SEMH provision in Theale opening in September 2022 (see para 2.11 below).

2.5 The top up budgets under most pressure are as follows:

- Independent special schools
- Maintained special schools
- Maintained and academy mainstream EHCPs
- Non maintained special schools

2.6 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 2022-23. The figures assume a middle ground between the best case scenario and the worst case scenario (financially) in terms of Tribunal outcomes.

2.7 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 21-22 and so have only incurred part year costs this year, but will incur full year costs in 22-23. In addition there are a number of anticipated new placements for children with a variety of needs including SEMH and Autism, 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).

2.8 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.

2.9 Mainstream top ups (maintained and academies)

This increase reflects an increasing number of EHCPs in mainstream schools. It should be noted that EHCP top up values for mainstream schools (including resourced 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 may wish to consider whether it would like to increase these values.

2.10 Non maintained special schools

The increase is accounted for by children moving in to the area already placed in non maintained special schools and a pending Tribunal case for a specialist placement.

2.11 New Secondary SEMH Provision in Theale

The Forum will be aware from previous reports that planning has been taking place since 2019 for a new 42 place provision for young people with complex emotional needs who may have a diagnosis of autism. This provision will be managed by The Castle School and will be based on the site of the old Theale Primary School. The provision is on target to open in September 2022 with 12 pupils initially. 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 £62K). The case for and savings associated with this provision have been set out in previous reports to the Forum. All 12 of the students who will transfer to the new provision in September 2022 are likely otherwise to have been placed in external placements.

3. PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS (PRU) – STATUTORY

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

TABLE 3	2020/21 Budget		2021/22 Budget			2022/23	
PRU Budgets	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 6)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	Difference 21/22 budget & 22/23 prediction
PRU Top Up Funding (90625)	818,400	807,074	821,920	821,920	0	830,140	+8,220
PRU EHCP SEMH Placements (90628)	557,520	581,965	571,450	619,840	48,390	767,020	+195,570
Non WBC PRU Top Up Funding (90626)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	1,375,920	1,389,039	1,393,370	1,441,760	48,390	1,597,160	+203,790

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 22/23 PRU Top Up Funding is based on the profile of pupils at I-College in the summer term and shows a slight increase in budget by £8,220.

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 Other Statutory Services	2020/21 Budget		2021/22 Budget			2022/23	Difference 21/22 budget & 22/23 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 6)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Applied Behaviour Analysis (90240)	136,580	146,790	150,470	217,350	66,880	150,470	0
Sensory Impairment (90290)	227,590	250,944	247,860	244,750	-3,110	243,900	-3,960
SEN Commissioned Provision (90577)	567,650	558,395	584,480	583,050	-1,430	584,480	0
Equipment for SEN Pupils (90565)	15,000	25,972	15,000	20,000	5,000	15,000	0
Therapy Services (90295)	261,470	259,327	314,500	314,500	0	314,500	0
Elective home Education Monitoring (90288)	28,240	20,291	28,240	28,240	0	29,310	+1,070
Medical Home Tuition (90282)	205,000	138,626	172,730	172,730	0	178,160	+5,430
Hospital Tuition (90610)	39,050	19,850	39,280	62,940	23,660	39,950	+670
SEND Strategy (DSG) (90281)	61,060	40,137	68,700	56,562	-12,138	60,740	-7,960
Education of children with Health Needs	0	0	0	0	0	71,930	+71,930
Medical tuition for Children with Health Needs	0	0	0	0	0	136,000	+136,000
TOTAL	1,541,640	1,460,332	1,621,260	1,700,122	78,862	1,824,440	+203,180

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. The budget also covers the cost 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. No increase in cost is anticipated in this budget.

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. There will be a small reduction in budget needed next year due to a slight drop in numbers.

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. No increase in cost is anticipated for 2022-23.

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 2022-3, 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 which is starting to 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.

4.7 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 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 16 pupils deregistered from schools in September 2021, a fall from the previous September which was 34, but still much higher than pre-pandemic numbers.

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. Since transferring from i-college, savings of £67k have been achieved in the service.

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 2022-23 budget remains the same as 2021-22. 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. The slight reduction is due to an appointment on a lower scale point than was budgeted for.

4.11 Education of children with health needs

4.11.1 Local Authorities are under a duty to provide full time education for children with certified health needs after 15 days of absence. This service is provided for children with physical health needs where required, but the legislation also applies to children with mental health needs/anxiety who are emotionally based school avoiders. The number of local presenting cases has increased and it is important not to find ourselves in the position of other authorities who have been fined for not meeting this duty. The budget allocated for this includes capacity to oversee and monitor these cases, as well as funding for medical tuition or other appropriate educational support.

5 NON STATUTORY Services

5.10 **Table 5** details the non-statutory service budgets for 2020-21, 2021-22, and estimates for 2022-23.

5.11 The table shows the budget for these services in 2022/23 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 and 2021-22. The continuation of these services is critical to the deficit recovery strategy set out in a separate report.

TABLE 5	2020/21 Budget		2021/22 Budget			2022/23	Difference 21/22 budget & 22/23 prediction
	Budget £	Outturn £	Budget £	Forecast £ (Month 6)	Over/ (under) £	Estimate £	
Non Statutory Services							
Language and Literacy Centres LALs (90555)	116,200	114,900	122,000	122,000	0	135,740	+13,740
Specialist Inclusion Support Service (90585)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0

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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)	308,130	306,671	328,100	328,100	0	334,140	+6,040
ASD Advisory Service (90830)	150,390	129,415	170,430	170,430	0	174,080	+3,650
Vulnerable Children (90961)	50,000	45,804	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0
Early Development and Inclusion Team (90287)	51,950	48,965	58,375	58,375	0	62,505	+4,130
Dingley's Promise (90581)	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	0	30,000	0
Invest to save projects							
Therapeutic Thinking post (90372)	58,000	51,214	54,300	54,300	0	55,900	+1,600
Additional Vulnerable Children Grant (90961)	129,400	129,400	129,400	129,400	0	129,400	0
ASD Team - Additional High Level TA Support (90830)	58,000	12,320	59,540	59,540	0	61,560	+2,020
ASD Fund - Additional support (90830)	0	0	52,690	52,690	0	52,690	0
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) – WBC managed	0	0	121,730	121,730	0	123,840	+2,110
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) – secondary school managed	0	0	99,860	99,860	0	0	-99,860
TOTAL	1,063,270	979,888	1,387,625	1,387,625	0	1,321,055	-66,570

5.13 Language and Literacy Centres (LALs)

5.13.1 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.

5.13.2 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.

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

5.18 Vulnerable Children

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

5.18.2 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. This was further extended in 2021-22. The increase of £129,000 is shown separately in Table 5 under Invest to Save initiatives.

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 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.

5.20 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 Invest to Save projects

5.21.1 A report was brought to the HFG on 6th October concerning the Invest to Save projects funded in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

5.21.2 The report outlined the impact of the 2021 Invest to Save projects including savings achieved.

5.21.3 The report gave brief details on the 2021-22 Invest to Save projects which were put in place in September 2021.

5.21.4 Savings from the therapeutic thinking initiative and increased vulnerable children grant, against cost of the initiative, are shown in Tables 6(a), 6(b) and Table 7 below.

Table 6(a)

Savings in core group of 13 primary schools who have fully adopted therapeutic thinking

Strategy	Number avoided	Average cost	Saving
Permanent exclusion	3	£20,000	£60,000
Alternative placement	3	£20,000	£60,000
Specialist SEND placement	2	£62,000	£124,000
Total	8		£244,000

Table 6(b)

Savings in a wider group of schools as a result of “small gardens”

Strategy	Number avoided	Average cost	Saving
Permanent exclusion	4	£20,000	£80,000
Alternative placement	6	£20,000	£120,000
Specialist SEND placement	7	£62,000	£434,000
Total	17		£634,000

Table 7

Total estimated savings compared to invest to save budget for therapeutic thinking and increased VCG.

Invest to Save cost		Saving	Difference
Therapeutic thinking post	£54,300		
Increased VCG	£129,400		
Total	£183,700	£878,000	£695,000

5.21.5 Savings from the Autism TA project are set out in Tables 8 and 9 below.

Table 8

Savings resulting from intensive intervention from Autism HLTAs

Impact of not intervening	Number avoided	Average cost	Saving
Child becoming L4 EBSA	3	£62,000	£186,000
Specialist SEND placement	3	£62,000	£186,000
Total			£372,000

Table 9

Total estimated savings compared to invest to save budget for Autism TAs

Invest to Save cost		Saving	Difference
Autism TAs	£59,540		
Total	£59,540	£372,000	£312,460

5.21.6 It is proposed that the projects initially agreed in 2020-21, ie, therapeutic thinking, increased VCG and Autism TAs are now funded permanently through the HNB given the impact and savings which have been demonstrated.

5.21.7 Invest to save projects agreed in 2021-22 included

- An Autism Fund of £52,690 for allocation to schools to support children at risk of exclusion / requiring alternative placement
- £121,730 to support children who are emotionally based school avoiders in order to avoid specialist placements. This was for primary age children only (and one secondary school which bought in to the scheme). The funding pays for a 0.25 EP, A 0.5 EWO/Coordinator and a 0.5 EHA worker, all appointed in September 2021, in addition to creating a fund of £56,157 for allocation to schools via the EBSA Forum.

5.21.8 It is proposed that the invest to save projects agreed in 2021-22 are funded initially for one further year in 2022-23, pending a full evaluation in summer 2022.