

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP SERVICES

TO:	Reading Schools Forum		
DATE:	15 th March 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.		
SERVICE:	Children, Education & Early Help Services	WARDS:	All
AUTHOR:	Helen Redding	TEL:	0118 937 4109
JOB TITLE:	SEND Improvement Adviser	E-MAIL:	helen.redding@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides:

- a breakdown of the actual and forecast spend against each line of the High Needs Block (HNB);
- the proposed High Needs Block budget allocations for 2018/2019;
- a summary of the work being undertaken and progress made to deliver the SEND Strategy and make the most effective use of the resources available;
- a summary of next steps.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION FOR SCHOOLS FORUM

2.1 To note the current and forecast spend from the High Needs Block for 2017/2018.

2.2 To note and comment on the proposed High Needs Block budget for 2018/2019

2.3 To note the progress made against the SEND Strategy to date.

3 POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Council has strategic aims to establish Reading as a learning city and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit, to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all. Education and the funding of education is a key factor in the achievement of this aim. The High needs Block funding supports the promotion of equality for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 In October 2017 Schools Forum Meeting the Forum received a report detailing the High Needs Block spend and the provision being made through this budget.

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- 4.2 The High Needs Block supports the delivery of the Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy (2017 - 2022). The Strand 1 work stream which includes representative members of Schools Forum incorporates the analysis of data and information, including financial information, to inform future provision and joint commissioning.
- 4.3 HNB allocation to LAs for 18/19 was announced in December 2017 which includes:
- HNB baseline for 2018/2019;
 - additional top up allocated on the basis of the 2 - 19 population forecasts for 2017/2018.

High Needs Block	2018/2019 allocation	Variance from 2017/2018
High needs Formula	£19,295,601	+£1,625,601
Top Sliced for Academies for EFSA (recoupment) to pay academies direct (this will be changing when we receive our updated allocation in March) - (Potentially another 87.5k)	(£1,618,000)	-£148,000
High needs budget after ESFA recoupment	£17,677,601	+£1,773,601
0.5% from Schools Block	£434,000	-£405,100
Total High Needs Block	£18,111,601	+£1,682,601

Allocated to Deficit reduction	£2,193,400	
To be allocated	£15,918,201	

5. HIGH NEEDS BLOCK DEFICIT

- 5.1 The table below sets out the forecast deficit position at the end of 2017/2018.

Deficit position	£m
16 - 17 Deficit bought forward	3.397
Budget from Schools Block 16/17	0.839
Budget from Schools Block 17/18	0.920
Start of 17/18 deficit variance	1.638
Current estimated 17/18 in year forecast	1.782
Estimated deficit at 31 st March 2018	3.420

- 5.2 Please note that the difference between the DSG deficit and the High Needs deficit relates to the surplus underspends within the 16-17 Early Years Block (£200k), and the 2017/2018 underspend in Schools Block Growth Fund (£130k).
- 5.3 The Schools Forum agreed at its meeting on the 13th July 2017 that the £200k carry forward of the 2016/2017 underspend in Early Years Block would offset the pressures in the High Needs Block. It was agreed to show this separately for transparency of High Needs Block pressures.
- 5.4 In addition we have identified that a 16-19 study programme grant has been carried forward since 2015/2016 that could have been used to fund £4k (element 1) of the post 16 costs at Cranbury College. Action was taken in 2017 to stop this grant from

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High Needs Block**

being clawed back by the DfE. Contribution towards Cranbury post 16 provision is a legitimate use of this grant and so it has been agreed to use the carry forward to reduce the High Needs Block deficit by £341k. The calculations are set out below:

- Element 1: £4k
- 32 post 16 places @ 4k = £128k

- 15-16 reimbursement to HNB £128k
- 16-17 reimbursement to HNB £128k
- 17-18 (for 8 months) reimbursement to HNB £85k (this figure is shown in the outturn table in section 6)
- **Total £341k reimbursement to HNB**

5.5 The table below sets out the 18/19 position regarding paying off previous years' deficit, and balance of deficit left to find.

Deficit Position	£m
17-18 Deficit B/forward	3.420
Budget From Schools Block 16-17	0.839
Budget from Schools block 17-18	0.920
Budget from Schools block 18-19	0.434
Start of 18-19 Deficit variance	1.227
Current Estimated 18-19 in year forecast	1.500
Estimated Deficit at 31 st March 2019	2.727

6 CURRENT AND FORECAST SPEND FROM HIGH NEEDS BLOCK

6.1 The table below sets out the high needs block forecast for 2017/2018

Description	17-18 Budget	17-18 Estimated end of year forecast (rounded)	Variance
Centrally retained forecast costs	891,100	841,100	(50,000)
Strategy	336,900	311,900	(25,000)
ASC Support Service + Outreach	105,000	90,000	(15,000)
Hard to Place Fund	50,000	40,000	(10,000)
Travellers Education	35,000	35,000	-
Personal Education Allowance	38,200	38,200	-
Central costs for Cranbury + other Departments	226,000	226,000	-
Transport Contribution	100,000	100,000	-
Hospital and Medical	181,000	152,500	(28,500)
Cranbury Hospital Funding	147,500	147,500	-
Medical Hospital Tuition (Tier 4)	33,500	5,000	(28,500)
Central Contracts	539,000	539,000	-
Sensory Consortium	300,000	300,000	-
S&L + Occupational (RBC Main Contract)	239,000	239,000	-
Post 16	820,000	672,000	(148,000)
Post 16 Colleges	500,000	693,000	193,000
Cranbury Base Funding post 16 (32 Places)	320,000	(21,000)	(341,000)

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Description	17-18 Budget	17-18 Estimated end of year forecast (rounded)	Variance
Maintained Base Funding	2,470,000	2,501,667	31,667
Cranbury Base Funding (100 Places)	1,000,000	1,000,000	-
E P Collier Base (12 Places)	120,000	120,000	-
Holybrook Base (32 Places)	320,000	320,000	-
Phoenix Base (56 Places)	560,000	560,000	-
Blessed Hugh Faringdon Base (16 Places)	160,000	191,667	31,667
Christ The King Base (21 Places)	210,000	210,000	-
Manor (project funded as 10 places)	100,000	100,000	-
Academy Base Funding		90,000	90,000
Prospect (30 places)	£1,650,000	-	-
Highdown (10 places)	funded from	-	-
Avenue (125 places)	£1,766,000	£90,000	90,000
Thames Valley Free School (50 places not part of top slice)	EFSA top slice. Increase required for Avenue place expansion	-	-
Cluster Funding	250,000	263,267	13,267
Cluster funding	250,000	263,267	13,267
Other Alternative	822,000	808,354.50	(13,646)
Cranbury additional Funding lump sum (Non Statement)	652,000	652,000	-
Haven - Reading Girls' School	170,000	156,355	(13,646)
Maintained mainstream schools EHCP top up	1,036,800	1,133,000	96,200
EHCP top up - Mainstream Provision	1,036,800	1,133,000	96,200
Special School Allocation	5,400,000	7,057,000	1,657,000
Special Schools	4,600,000	6,540,000	1,940,000
Resource Units	800,000	517,000	(283,000)
Independent Placements	2,900,000	3,382,600	482,600
Specialist placements in independent and non-maintained special schools	2,900,000	2,905,000	5,000
Other independent alternative placements	-	477,600	477,600
Early Years	280,000	262,000	(18,000)
Snowflakes	100,000	100,000	-
Early Years - Portage	120,000	120,000	-
Early Years Inclusion Funding	60,000	60,000	(18,000)
TOTAL of High Needs Block Overall	15,589,900	17,702,489	2,112,589
Previous years' deficit	1,759,400	3,397,133	1,637,733
Total of HNB overall plus deficit	17,349,300	21,099,622	3,750,322

6.2 The forecast variance in centrally retained relates to not filling a post and a different model of delivery of the ASC advisory support as set out in the October 2017 Schools Forum Paper, and an underspend forecast in the Hard To Place budget. A new model of use of this budget will be explored as part of the 2018/2019 budget, linking with other inclusion related funding and development of a model of school to school support.

- 6.3 The forecast variance in medical and hospital relates to less children and young people needing to access Tier 4 independent hospital education support.
- 6.4 The forecast variance in maintained base funding relates to the additional places commissioned from Blessed Hugh Faringdon (part year).
- 6.5 The forecast variance in academy base funding relates to additional places commissioned from the Avenue School (part year). This figure may be adjusted slightly as children are admitted throughout the year.
- 6.6 The forecast variance in cluster funding relates to prior commitments made in 2016/2017 for the academic year.
- 6.7 The forecast variance in other alternative relates to The Haven ceasing in December 2017.
- 6.8 The forecast variance in mainstream top up relates to updated actual costs plus forecast costs to end of year for pupils who EHCPs have been made final or will be made final towards the end of the financial year. It has been identified that funding for Dingley's Promise funded specialist places has come from this cost centre (£23k in 2017/2018). Budget will be moved to a different budget line for 2018/2019. The amount of money received is offset by Nursery Education Grant (NEG) funding.
- 6.9 The forecast variance in special school and resource unit allocation (top ups) mainly relates to the increase in placements at The Avenue School, offset by a reduction in some resourced unit placements (mainly Highdown placements).
- 6.10 The forecast variance in independent placements relates to a small overspend in independent and non-maintained special school placements, and a significant spend against other independent providers (for which there is no budget allocation), most of which are alternative provision placements. Further interrogation has identified that many of these pupils are on the roll of a school (the school would be monitoring this placement and should be making a contribution to the funding from their allocated resources). Further analysis of this group is required to identify whether there is any duplication of funding.
- 6.11 The forecast variance in early years inclusion funding relates to demand. This is a contribution to a larger budget, the balance of which is funded through Early Years Block.

7. PROPOSED HIGH NEEDS BLOCK BUDGET

- 7.1 The table below sets out the proposed budget allocation for 2018/2019. Work will continue throughout the financial year to look at alternative models of delivery where appropriate and reduce costs.

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High Needs Block**

Paragraph reference	Description	Proposed 18-19 Budget
8	Centrally retained forecast costs	922,300
8.1	Inclusion Support post costs x 2	140,700
8.2	Inclusion support budget (including Manor Project, School to School Support and outreach)	440,000
8.3	Travellers Education contribution	35,000
8.4	Virtual School - Children Looked After	127,600
8.5	Central overheads	79,000
8.6	Transport Contribution	100,000
9	Hospital and Medical	167,500
9.1	Cranbury Hospital Funding	147,500
9.2	Medical Hospital Tuition (Tier 4)	20,000
10	Central Contracts / SLAs	645,000
10.1	Sensory Consortium	300,000
10.2	S&L + Occupational (RBC Main Contract)	345,000
11	Post 16	945,000
11.1	Post 16 Colleges	700,000
11.2	Cranbury Base Funding post 16 (32 Places)	245,000
12	Resourced Provision/Specialist Provision Place Funding	3,906,500
12.1	Maintained Schools	2,288,500
12.1.1	Cranbury Base Funding (100 Places)	1,000,000
12.1.2	E P Collier Base (12 Places)	88,000
12.1.3	Holybrook Base (32 Places)	320,000
12.1.4	Phoenix Base (56 Places)	560,000
12.1.5	Blessed Hugh Farringdon Base (16 Places)	178,500
12.1.6	Christ The King Base (21 Places)	142,000
12.2	Academies (top slice)	1,618,000
12.2.1	Prospect (30 places)	1,618,000
12.2.2	Highdown (5 places from Sept 18)	
12.2.3	Avenue (150 places from Sept 18)	
13	Alternative Provision	652,000
13.1	Cranbury Top-up Funding (Non Statement)	652,000
13.2	Other independent alternative placements	-
14	Mainstream schools EHCP top up	1,175,000
14.1	EHCP top up - Mainstream Provision	1,175,000
15	Special School/specialist provisions top up Allocation	6,047,900
15.1	Special Schools Top-up	5,497,900

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Paragraph reference	Description	Proposed 18-19 Budget
15.2	Specialist SEND Provision Top-up	550,000
16	Independent Placements	2,900,000
16.1	Specialist placements in independent and non-maintained special schools	2,900,000
17	Early Years	175,000
17.1	Snowflakes	100,000
17.2	Early Years Inclusion Funding	50,000
17.3	Dingley	25,000
	TOTAL of High Needs Block Overall	17,536,200
	Budget to pay off previous years' deficit	2,193,400
	Total of HNB overall plus deficit	19,729,600

8. CENTRALLY RETAINED COSTS (£902,300)

8.1 **Inclusion support posts (£140,700)** - this budget funds the costs of 2 post retained by the Local Authority. 1 carries out a range of statutory functions relating to monitoring exclusions, part time timetables and other issues relating to vulnerable pupils, and the other delivers the ASC Advisory Support.

8.2 **Inclusion support budget (£415,000)** - This budget is a combination of Manor Project budget (£100k), ASC Outreach through Christ the King (£40k) with the balance made up of what was previously identified as Hard to Place and Cluster Funding. Feedback on the use of Cluster Funding is that it has not been used consistently to meet needs early. A working group will be formed through the SEND Strategy work to ensure most efficient and effective use of this resource:

- to develop and implement a commissioned (funded) school to school support model that draws on the best SEND practice in Reading and targets resources consistently at the greatest areas of need;
- to redefine a process for accessing exceptional needs funding to support identified pupils and ensure a more consistent approach across the borough;

In addition Manor School Provision will form part of a piece of work with those schools with specialist provisions and projects to determine potential future operational models in Reading. Work has been undertaken and is still being progressed to inform this work.

8.3 **Traveler Education (£35,000)** - This forms part of the Equalities Service which has been part of a consultation regarding its future. The outcome of this consultation is yet to be determined, and may impact on the budget contribution.

8.4 **Virtual School Children Looked After (£127,600)** - This contributes towards the 136k from schools block (combined services) for the Virtual school

- 8.5 **Central overheads (£79,000)** - This covers the cost of council overheads, and reduces as more schools convert.
- 8.6 **SEND transport contribution (£100k)** - This contributes to the total SEND Transport spend of £1.993 m (a forecast pressure of £270k. These were attributed as set out in the table below:
9. **HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL (£167,500)**
- 9.1 **Hospital Education (£147,500)** - This budget funds a teaching team at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and is hosted by Cranbury College. It is required to support pupils from any Local Authority area who are in hospital in Reading.
- 9.2 **Other hospital funding (£20,000)** - This budget funds the cost of pupils' education while they attend tier 4 specialist independent mental health hospital provision which is commissioned by NHS England.
10. **CENTRAL CONTRACTS (£645,000)**
- 10.1 **Sensory Consortium (£300,000)** - This is a joint arrangement with Windsor and Maidenhead and Berkshire Local Authorities.
- 10.2 **Speech and Language (SALT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) Contract.**
The contract value is £345k. High Needs Block has funded £239k towards the contract (68% of the contract value). This figure will be adjusted once we receive confirmation from the Clinical Commissioning Group regarding their contribution to this contract.
11. **POST 16 (945,000)**
- 11.1 **Post 16 Colleges (£700,000)** - There has been a continued increase in demand for college placements. Strand 4 of the SEND Strategy are looking at integrating the transition into adulthood work for young people with SEND, and working with key partners to align this with other post 16 pathways into FE, employment, apprenticeships etc.
- 11.2 **Cranbury Post 16 base funding (£245,000)** - Cranbury College is funded for 32 places in their Post 16 provision (Called "vision") - In addition, there is a £75k contribution from the 16 - 18 Study Programme Grant. The total received is £320k.
12. **RESOURCED PROVISION/SPECIALIST PROVISION PLACE FUNDING (3,906,500)** - this funds the pre 16 place element for each place regardless of how many pupils are on roll. The way in which this is funded has changed this year. Previously, schools did not receive the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) for pupils in the provision. From this year they will receive £6k plus the AWPU for filled places, and £10k for vacant places.

- 12.1 **Maintained school place funding (£2,288,500)**
- 12.2 **Academies Place Funding (£1,618,000)** - This is top sliced by the ESFA from the Local Authority High Needs Block allocation to fund places in Academies based on the LA High Needs Block return which is submitted in November of the previous year.
13. **ALTERNATIVE PROVISION (£652,000)**
- 13.1 **Cranbury top up funding (£652,000)** was previously paid as a lump sum. Cranbury will receive the same amount of budget but allocated as a top up. The value of top up has been calculated on the average number of pupils on roll. If it was calculated on £652,000 divided by the number of places and only allocated when the pupils were on roll, this would impact negatively on the budget. By calculating it as a top up, the Council can work with Cranbury College to benchmark against other PRUs.
- 13.2 **Other independent alternative placements (AP) (no budget)** - there has been an increase in the number of pupils attracting additional support for AP either through their school or through the Council. There is currently no budget and no clear protocol, and there may be some schools receiving double funding. Each of these cases will be reviewed to establish the best way forward.
14. **EHCP TOP UPS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS (£1,175,000)** - this reflects the estimates for 2018/2019 based on the current profile.
15. **SPECIAL SCHOOL AND SPECIALIST PROVISION TOP UP (£6,880,400)**
- 15.1 **Special School Top Up (£6,330,400)** - The increase links mainly to the increased number of pupils at the Avenue School.
- 15.2 **Specialist Provision Top Ups (£550,000)** - This has been adjusted since 2017/2018 to reflect the current pattern and forecasts for 2018/2019.
16. **OUT OF AUTHORITY (OOA) INDEPENDENT AND NON-MAINTAINED SPECIAL SCHOOLS (NMSS) (£2,900,000)** - This budget has been set at the same value as 2017/2018. We are continuing to work to improve local provision to meet the needs of more children and young people locally, including developing a plan to improve accommodation at some of the special schools in Reading. The specialist provision review will also contribute towards this.

Placement type	Total FTE	Day FTE	38W Weekly boarder FTE	38w termly boarder FTE	52 week FTE	Estimated 17/18 cost
Independent	37.1	25.7	2	0.3	9.1	£ 1,906,108
NMSS	23.9	18.3	2.3	-	3.3	£ 993,310
Total	55.3	44.0	4.3	0.3	12.4	£ 2,899,418

17. **EARLY YEARS (£175,000)** - This figure has reduced from 2017/2018 as a consequence of moving some of the early years functions being funded from Early Years Block in 2018/2019. We also established that the contribution towards Dingley's Promise SEND provision was being funded from Top Ups, so it has now been realigned to Early Years budget lines so that it can be reported in the right place.

- 17.1 **The Snowflake Centre (£100,000)** is based at New Bridge Nursery School and supports children with additional complex needs. Further work is needed with the provision and with other Nursery Providers to look at how the costs are broken down and how it can be developed to support more local provision for children and families.
- 17.2 **Early Years Inclusion Fund (£50,000)** this is a contribution to a larger budget funded from the Early Years Block. It supports inclusion of children in early years' settings. Work has been undertaken to move away from 1:1 funding to identify and support inclusive practices and resources that enable young children with SEND to have their needs met in these settings.
- 17.3 **Dingley's Promise SEND Provision (£25,000)** - The cost of the provision is more than the £25k but some costs are offset by income from Nursery Education Grant.

18. PROGRESS TO DATE IN DELIVERING SEND STRATEGY

- 18.1 Reading's SEND Strategy has been communicated to a range of partners and a communication plan is being developed to ensure all partners have regular information on it. It has been considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and members of that board committed to supporting its delivery. Progress is reported regularly to The Health and Wellbeing Board and the ACE Committee.
- 18.2 A SEND Strategy Board which is chaired by the Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services has been set up and has met 3 times to date. It has membership from all key partners, including Reading Families Forum (RFF) which is important to successful delivery of the Strategy. The Board is monitoring the implementation of the strategy, and will ensure progress is made. Each strand lead provides a summary of progress at each board meeting through a highlight report. Schools Forum members are on the Data and Information Strand and are contributing to this work which is welcomed.
- 18.3 Reading Borough Council has been working closely with RFF at both an operational and strategic level and the impact has been very positive to date. They bring a valuable perspective and constructive challenge to the future planning of services.
- 18.4 RFF has been involved in:
- every Strand Group linked to the Strategy;
 - reviewing the local offer on a regular basis and the feedback resulting in recommended changes being made;
 - reciprocal peer review activity of the Local Offer of other Local Authorities in the region;
 - SEND team away day contributing to the self-evaluation and plans of the service in relation to co-production;
 - Joint meetings with the Department for Education (DfE) regarding SEND in Reading;
 - Considering options for future delivery models for IASS

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- 18.5 'Special United', the young people's forum is now established and have a page on the 'Local Offer' (SEND Services Guide). They have been involved in reviewing the Local Offer and Short Breaks.
- 18.6 Multi agency strand groups have been established with Terms of Reference for each, and meetings have been held for 3 of the 4 strands.
- 18.7 A comprehensive SEND data report has been developed to support strategic planning and commissioning decisions, including any changes in provision that may be required. This will be updated on an annual basis to support prioritisation of actions and evidenced based decision making.
- 18.8 In line with national trends, there has been an increase the numbers of children with additional needs, and in a change in the profile of needs, in particular those diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and those identified with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). A needs gap analysis is being undertaken to identify the support required by schools in relation to children with ASC and SEMH. This analysis will be used to develop proposals to improve outcomes for children building upon existing good practice.
- 18.9 A detailed graduated response guide is being co-produced to support early years professionals and settings, schools and colleges and partner agencies in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people as early as possible, as well as mapping of provision and services available to support early intervention. There will be 4 Graduated Response documents (Pre-school, 5-11 years, secondary and post 16), with the 5-11years guidance due to be piloted this term.
- 18.10 The range of services and provision, including support for universal services to identify and meet the needs of children at the earliest stage, are being reviewed to ensure that the majority of current and future children can have their needs met within the local area. This includes targeting outreach support from settings/schools with best practice in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- 18.11 Audits have been carried out in the following areas:
(i) The Exceptional Needs Funding Panels for pre-school children to identify types of need that pre-school settings are requesting additional support for, outcomes, and numbers that go onto have an EHCP;
(ii) Portage Home Visiting Service to identify the types of need, outcomes, and numbers that have an EHCP as a pre-schooler and those that go onto have an EHCP at primary school;
(iii) The Sensory Integration Massage Service to identify the needs of the children that access this service and their outcomes.
- 18.12 An Early Years audit and training programme for pre-school settings will be evaluated.
- 18.13 There has historically been a significant overspend in the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). A detailed report on HNB spend has been presented to and discussed at Schools Forum and next steps agreed to ensure that allocation is appropriate and based on evidenced need, is targeted where it needs to be, and is supporting improving outcomes for children and young people. Steps have

been taken to reduce costs where possible in the short term while actions are agreed to ensure the budget is focussed on statutory requirements and against priority areas of need.

- 18.14 Progress has been made with converting the previous statements of SEND to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and additional capacity has been put in place to meet the March 2018 deadline for the conversion of all statements to EHCPs.
- 18.15 The service has maintained good performance against the measure of completing EHCPs within 20 weeks (90%) and aims to improve this further. The service priority in the next 12 months is to ensure consistency in the quality of plans being produced.
- 18.16 The DfE SEND Adviser meets with every Local Authority SEND lead on a termly basis to monitor the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014. Reading Families Forum attends these meetings so that they can contribute to the update on progress. His note of visit states 'There continues to be impressive progress on most key areas. This is supported by good leadership which is being consolidated with permanent appointments. The active involvement of the PCF in operations and strategy is particularly impressive. The local offer is accessible and comprehensive and increasingly central to development. Progress on transfers of statements to EHCPs is steadily building momentum and 20-week assessment compliance is solid.'

19. NEXT STEPS

- 19.1 Work will continue through the SEND Strategy Groups to take appropriate actions to make more efficient and effective use of resources.
- 19.2 Progress will be reported regularly to the Schools Forum.