

## SCHOOLS FORUM

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### MINUTES OF THE SCHOOLS FORUM MEETING HELD ON 10 OCTOBER 2019 AT COUNTY HALL, BYTHESEA ROAD, TROWBRIDGE, BA14 8JN.

#### Present:

Neil Baker (Chairman), Aileen Bates, Andy Bridewell, Rebecca Carson, Sam Churchill, Phil Cook, John Hawkins, Ross Henning, Mel Jacob, Lisa Percy (Vice-Chair), Giles Pugh, Ellen Plowman, John Proctor, Nigel Roper, Trudy Srawley, Fergus Stewart, David Whewell and Catriona Williamson

#### Also Present:

Cllr Pauline Church (Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills), Jane Davies (Portfolio Holder for Education and SEND), Grant Davis (Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager), Helean Hughes (Director – Education & Skills), Louise Lewis (Head of School Effectiveness), Lisa Pullin (Democratic Services Officer), Marie Taylor (Head of Finance – Children and Education), Judith Westcott (Acting Head of Commissioning and Joint Planning)

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#### 43 Election of Chair

##### **Resolved:**

**The Forum agreed to appoint Neil Baker as Chair of Schools Forum for 2019/20.**

#### 44 Election of Vice Chair

##### **Resolved:**

**The Forum agreed to appoint Lisa Percy as Vice Chair of Schools Forum for 2019/20.**

#### 45 Apologies and Changes of Membership

Apologies were received from the following Forum members: Mark Cawley (Early Years Rep), Michelle Chilcott (Secondary Academy Rep) and Jon Hamp (Special School Academy Rep).

Apologies were received from the following Wiltshire Council Officers: Terence Herbert (Executive Director – Children and Education) and Helen Jones (Director – Commissioning).

## **Membership Changes:**

The following changes to the membership of the Forum were noted:

Fergus Stewart (Head of St Laurence School, Bradford on Avon is the new Chair of WASHH). Fergus replaces Neil Spurdell (Head of Sheldon School) on the Forum.

At the last meeting, we identified where there was the need to appoint an additional primary academy representative and this position has been filled by Rebecca Carson of Woodford Valley Primary Academy.

Lindsay West is no longer the Principal of Durrington Infants School and so a new Primary Academy representative is needed. Catriona Williamson as Chair of PHF will raise it and seek a new representative at their next meeting in November.

Cllr Ross Henning will join as the Observer representative on behalf of the Local Youth Network. Ross is the Vice Chair of the Chippenham Local Youth Network.

We are still awaiting a Primary School Governor Rep from the WGA (to replace Sue Jiggins).

## 46 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 June 2019 were approved as a correct record.

### **Resolved:**

**That the Chairman sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2019.**

Forum Members asked about an update on the Admissions Appeals service as this had been requested to be presented to this meeting. Grant Davis (Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager) confirmed that this was still being worked on with colleagues in Democratic Services and would come to the next Forum meeting on 12 December 2019.

## 47 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chairman welcomed all to the Forum and asked all others present to introduce themselves.

The Chairman made the following announcement:

Press attendance at meetings

The meeting is not being webcast today, however we are aware that this is a public meeting that anyone can attend. The Chairman asked if any members of the press were present. There were no members of press or public present at the meeting.

48 **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

49 **Wiltshire Schools Forum Proportionality, Membership and Terms of Reference**

Lisa Pullin (Clerk to the Panel) referred to the Proportionality, Membership and Terms of Reference report that had been circulated with the Agenda.

Lisa reminded the Forum of the review of a proportionality of membership that was carried out in June 2019 where it was identified that there was a change to the Wiltshire pupil numbers and that there was a need to appoint another Primary Academy representative to the Forum.

Rebecca Carson (Headteacher – Woodford Valley) had been appointed as the additional Primary Academy representative and the Forum's Terms of Reference would need to be amended to reflect this change in membership numbers, with approval via the Delegated Decision process to be sought from the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills. Lisa referred to Terms of Reference which were attached as Appendix 1 and asked the Forum to note that there was also a minor change to correct a Wiltshire Council job title.

The Forum were also asked to note the current vacancies and that requests had been made to the Primary Heads Forum and Wiltshire Governors Association to nominate representatives:

- A Primary Academy representative (previous Head had left School)
- A Primary Governor representative
- Observer representative – Wiltshire Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum.

**Resolved:**

**That Wiltshire Schools Forum:**

- i) Notes that the proportionality of the Forum has been reviewed and that in light of this a new Primary Academy representative (Rebecca Carson) has been appointed.**
- ii) Approves the proposed changes to the Forum's Terms of Reference as detailed in Appendix 1 and requests that these changes be presented to the Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Skills for approval through the delegated decision process.**
- iii) Notes the current Membership details of the Forum.**

- iv) **Recommends that representatives to the vacancies detailed in the report be requested to be appointed by the Primary Heads Forum (PHF), Wiltshire Governors Association (WGA) and the Wiltshire and Children and Families Voluntary Sector Forum as soon as possible.**

50 **Updates from Working Groups**

The Forum noted the update received by way of the minutes of the Early Years Reference Group meeting held on 13 September 2019 that was circulated with the Agenda.

A Forum Member asked if the plans to roll out the Liquidlogic system was still intended? Marie Taylor (Head of Finance - Children and Education) confirmed that yes this roll out was still ongoing.

The Forum noted the update received by way of the minutes of the joint meeting of the School Funding Working Group and SEN Working Group meeting held on 1 October 2019 (circulated within Agenda Supplement (1)).

It was noted that Catriona Williamson, Sam Churchill and Nick Breakwell were present at the joint meeting and that their attendance should be amended on the notes.

**Resolved:**

**That Schools Forum note the minutes of the Early Years Reference Group meeting held on 13 September 2019 and the joint meeting of the Schools Funding and SEN Working Groups held on 1 October 2019 subject to them being amended to confirm the correct attendance.**

51 **Schools Revenue Surplus and Deficit Balances 2018/19**

Grant Davis (Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager) referred to the report which presented the position of revenue balances for Wiltshire maintained schools as at 31 March 2019 and identified those schools that were in surplus and in deficit. Grant also explained the appendices to the report in some detail and asked the Forum to note that the analysis excluded 2 schools that had converted to academies during the 2018/19 financial year.

Grant highlighted the following:

- As part of the DSG's assurance framework, the DfE ask Local Authorities to provide additional information in certain circumstances. Wiltshire would not trigger an investigation from the DfE from the number of schools that have had revenue balances of more than 15% of their school budget share for the last 5 years. However, there could be an investigation triggered in relation to the number of schools that have had a deficit balance of more than 2.5% for the last four years;

- The number of schools in deficit has decreased from 19 in 2017/18 to 16 in 2018/19, however the value of the deficits has increased from £3.24m in 2017/18 to £3.67m in 2018/19. This was positive news and recognised that it was not easy to change things around to achieve this;
- The number of schools in surplus in 2017/18 and 2018/19 remains constant at 125 and 124 respectively, however the value of the surpluses has increased by £0.59m from £9.70m in 2017/18 to £10.29m in 2018/19;
- Lypiatt Primary School (which had a high surplus) closed in August 2019 and was a site-specific school for MOD children who had returned from overseas following a family breakdown. Numbers had considerably reduced and there was no deemed need. The school had previously been propped up by MOD funding and this had been withdrawn, making the school unviable;
- There were a number of other schools not highlighted in Appendix 3 due to Officer/formatting error which have also had revenue budgets in excess of 15% for the last 5 years and these were – Crockerton, Southwick and Urchfont; and
- A number of support mechanisms have been put in place to support schools facing financial difficulty. The Local Authority continues to support the F40 Group which works for fairer funding for schools with Wiltshire being the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest funded. There was an increased capacity of Schools Strategic Financial Advisors to work with schools facing deficit budgets. There was a new structure within the School Improvement Team to support schools facing a number of challenges and there was collaborative work with Regional and School Improvement Advisers to ensure that recovery plans take account of both educational as well as financial needs.

Forum Members asked the following questions:

13 of the schools that were in deficit in 2018/19 were Primary Schools – is there a trend in respect of this?

*Grant Davis reported that this is a backward-looking report and across the board it does look like more schools would be heading into difficulty and towards a deficit balance. The DfE had reclassified the numbers of pupils/size of schools and less than 100 pupils was now classed as a very small school with pupils between 100 and 175 being classed as a small school. Wiltshire has consistently had a birth rate which produced 5,500 pupils each year, however, due to a demographic dip, the birth rate has dipped to less than 5000 a year leading to a 10% drop in pupils starting school, which will affect school's intake and future planning.*

If birth rates continue to drop and there are more “smaller” schools in Wiltshire, how would they recover and be able to stay open?

*Grant reported that a Small School Strategy was currently being worked on and being led by the Director for Education and Skills and the team would be sharing the lessons learned with those schools who have successfully come out of deficit.*

Does the re-categorisation of schools make a difference to us in Wiltshire?

*Grant reported that Wiltshire does have a higher proportion of very small schools.*

New schools and extensions have been built to existing schools in Wiltshire to deal with an increase in demand – was there wrong forecasting on this?

*Grant reported that 1400 children were expected as part of the Army re-basing and that this number hadn't quite materialised and whilst specific schools were identified to deal with this increase, it is also up to parental choice as to where they send their children to school. All we can do is prepare for what is planned but we cannot take into account parental preference.*

Should surplus balances be used for the benefit of the education of the child?

*Grant reported that going forward over the next 5 years it was likely that there would be no surplus balances as costs were likely to rise with budgets not rising in line with this. The 5 year projection shows that the overall position will have moved from a collective budget surplus to a collective deficit.*

It can't help our case when we say we are poorly funded if we have so many schools with budget surpluses?

*Helean Hughes (Director – Education & Skills) reported that she is hearing that many schools have had to make very tough decisions to keep within budgets and may have made cuts that they are not entirely comfortable with.*

**Resolved:**

**That Schools Forum note the report on School Revenue Surplus and Deficit balances for 2018/19.**

## 52 **Dedicated Schools Budget - Budget Monitoring 2019/20**

Marie Taylor (Head of Finance – Children and Education) referred to the Dedicated Schools Budget Monitoring 2019/20 report that was circulated with the Agenda. Marie highlighted the following:

- That an overspend of £4.864m was currently projected against the overall schools' budget which is really concerning and although this was the first report of the new financial year, the ongoing pressures on the high needs block is known and understood;

- The budgets for the free entitlement for 15 and 30 hours childcare are currently forecast to be overspent by £0.978m – this is because the take-up has increased above the budgeted hours which were based on the average take up of the past 3 years;
- High needs budgets are projected to overspend by £3.958m with the biggest areas of overspend being Independent Special School packages, Named Pupil Allowances and top ups in non-Wiltshire provision;
- The major driver of the increased cost is volume which is measured in FTE pupils and at the last meeting, Forum members asked for more detail about activity which was included within Appendix 2. It was important to note that the number of EHCP's being requested has not slowed at all and are rising at a similar rate as 2018/19. There had been an increase of 5.98% in EHCP's from 1 April 2019 to September 2019 which is 213 EHCP's – an average increase of 14/15 per month;
- There had been an increased take up of the Inclusion Support Fund with the budget being based on previous take up, so this was beneficial for the children accessing this, but not for the budget;
- There was also a huge increase of 26% for the Named Pupil Allowance;
- Of real concern was that the forecast overspend would take the DSG reserve in to a deficit position of £7.130m. Last year the Authority did not trigger the submission of a DfE Action Plan for a DSG deficit of more than 1% of total DSG, but it was looking likely we would require a recovery plan and explanation to the DfE in June 2020. The ISOS findings and new SEN Strategy currently being drafted would be used as an operational tool to take the school budget forward;

A Forum member noted that the SEN alternative provision, Direct Payments and Elective Home Education provision has jumped from 37 to 137 and appears to have come out of nowhere. Marie reported that they were now monitoring this data closely as it was the first time it has become part of the monitoring and it was good that the authority were now aware of it.

**Resolved:**

**That the Forum note the budget monitoring position as at the end of August 2019 together with the findings and recommendations from the ISOS report and presentation and the Schools Budget 2020/21 consultation report.**

53 **High Needs Update**

Marie Taylor (Head of Finance – Children and Education) referred to the journey so far presentation (shown at the meeting and attached as Appendix 1

to this Minutes) which showed the timeline and actions taken by the Authority to address the budget pressures on the high needs block.

Ben Bryant and Karina Kulawik from the ISOS Partnership were present at the meeting to share the findings and recommendations from their final report (attached under Agenda item 18 as a confidential part II paper). It was confirmed that this report was no longer confidential and could now be shared as appropriate.

Ben reported to the Forum that he intended to give them the top line messages from the findings (presentation slides from meeting attached as Appendix 2 to the Minutes) and referred Forum members to the main report (which was now available as detailed above). Ben explained the aims of the review:

Evidence: To build an evidence base and collective understanding of how effectively the local system supports young people with high needs.

Engagement: To engage a broad range of partners, build consensus and harness collective expertise to shape and implement solutions.

Shared strategy: To work co-productively to develop a shared strategic approach.

ISOS approached the project as follows:

#### *Phase 1 – Initial scoping*

Between January and March 2019, ISOS carried out initial work to understand the current context, analysis of data and documents and scoped out their evidence-gathering.

#### *Phase 2 – In-depth evidence gathering*

Between April and May 2019, ISOS carried out broad engagements with key partners to gather feedback and evidence.

#### *Phase 3 – Testing findings and shaping recommendations*

Between June and July 2019, ISOS were testing findings and shaping recommendations and a future approach through co-production.

Ben thanked all those that had worked with ISOS and contributed to workshops etc.

Ben detailed the overarching messages which were:

- Wiltshire is a well-regarded local SEND and high needs system.
- The system is, however, facing considerable demand and financial pressures.

- There is a willingness to forge new relationships and a collective ethos around high needs.
- There is the need to build strong, strategic and co-productive relationships and partnerships with all key partners in the local system.
- There is the need to ensure core processes that govern the day to day operation of the system are effective, transparent and have the confidence of families and professionals.
- There needs to be a strategically planned continuum of SEND and high needs support, services and provision.

As part of the six broad themes (detailed below) that the review has explored, Ben gave details of the headline findings, potential “quick wins” and the identified longer term actions to the Forum.

1. Co-production with parents/carers and young people.
2. Partnerships working across education, health and care.
3. Identification, assessment and access to support.
4. Building inclusive capacity in mainstream schools and settings and providing targeted support for inclusion.
5. Developing responsive, effective local specialist provision.
6. Preparation for adulthood.

As previously identified the high needs block resources in Wiltshire are under severe pressure with an overspend that has been growing since 2016/17. As a first step ISOS looked at areas of spend that account for a significant proportion of the high needs block and where there has been growth in spending for the last 3 full financial years. Four areas were identified (detailed below) and ISOS had identified what might need to be done to get back to a balanced budget:

- Top-ups
- Non-maintained Special School placements
- Specialist bespoke packages at Independent Special Schools
- Enhanced Learning Provision in secondary schools.

A Forum Member commented that if nationally there is a move to bring more children back into mainstream education that will mean a further increase in EHCP’s which will continue to increase budget pressures. Does this Authority approve too many EHCPs and are they “too soft”?

Ben responded that there were some perceived inconsistencies that a rise in requests would mean a rise in volume and in turn a rise in acceptance of an EHCP. Work would need to be undertaken to ensure that there was a rigorous and consistent decision-making process in place. Karina Kulawik reported that most requests for EHCPs are identified in early years and that is a problem for Wiltshire as those young people will stay with them. The push for EHCPs comes from all directions and they are seen by most as the way for an early intervention when most cases it should be delivered through SEN support services. The Authority would need to build trust around extended support and outreach SEN support and not automatically go down the EHCP route.

A Forum Member asked if there was any correlation to others who receive similar funding to us – are we overspent because we are poorly funded? Ben responded that, yes, we are less well off than our statistical neighbours, but the pressure is not solely caused by underfunding and he did not feel there was any direct correlation. Wiltshire is unique as most schools head for an EHCP as a mechanism for support.

A Forum Member asked if support is not funded by an EHCP – where does it come from? Helean Hughes (Director – Education & Skills) reported that they are working on a pathway which is a pre to an EHCP. They were exploring current resources and spending on assessments to look at alternatives. It would be a cultural change not just go down the EHCP route, but to explore and offer SEN support. With the increase in EHCP requests it is a vicious circle as Support Workers spend a lot of time writing reports in response to applications and so have less time available to go into schools to provide SENCO support.

Helean Hughes (Director – Education & Skills) explained to the Forum the next steps following the ISOS findings.

Work had been undertaken to re-structure the Education and Skills Teams from November 2019. There would be closer alignment with School Effectiveness and a new post of Head of Inclusion and SEND was being recruited to. The final structure is attached as Appendix 3 to the Minutes.

#### *Short term developments*

- Matt Sambrook (Headteacher of Exeter House Special School and CEO of the Somerset Road Education Trust) had been seconded to work 3 days a week to lead on developing a joined-up approach to inclusion across Wiltshire. This was funded through FACT and had no impact on the high needs block;
- There had been a review of the SEND panel to ensure consistent chairing, application of banding and this was currently awaiting approval by Terence Herbert (Executive Director);
- The Team was developing communication by hosting free Heads' briefings and SENCO briefings to keep them informed of developments
- The SEMH pathway is being developed
- Transitions framework- clearer outcomes to be delivered
- A review of alternative provision in primary and secondary schools was being carried out (Forum Members were encouraged to complete the online survey)
- A targeted review of Independent Special School placements and electively home educated children was being carried out to look at who might be able to come back into mainstream schools with support

#### *Long term developments – co-produced*

- Review of ELP- redefine the model and align with resource bases

- Refining the banding framework (this is in conjunction with a FACT workstream)
- Providing targeted support without an EHCP- pathway being defined- enhancing SENs
- In-reach and out-reach- new schools in the north and the south
- Dyslexia specialisms in primary and secondary schools. Upskill schools to be able to support those with dyslexia
- Inclusion aligned to regional working (already working with School Effectiveness).

A Forum Member asked when would the “short term” developments be in place – Helean reported that it was planned to be this academic year – 2019/20.

Forum Members felt that the Authority should be ambitious and work towards all schools being dyslexia friendly. Helean reported that this was being worked towards – it was planned that schools would be trained up and that other schools could lead the work to make this happen.

Marie Taylor (Head of Finance – Children and Education) asked how it was intended to recruit volunteers from schools to help with all planned improvements/changes? It seems to be volunteers always from the same schools! Helean reported that she would be going to the School Governors conference in November (which would hopefully be represented by all Wiltshire Schools) to ask for volunteers there.

The Forum thanked Ben Bryant and Karina Kulawik from ISOS for all their work on the high needs review that was carried out.

A Forum Member asked how and when updates on the work would be received. It was suggested that this be reported via the School Funding Working Group.

Helean Hughes reported that the SEND Board was to be re-established. The Forum would be interested in the financial aspects of this and would look to hold them to account and so would welcome a regular progress report.

A Forum Member noted that they would be asked to make financial decisions in January and would need as much information as possible to be able to make informed decisions. Marie Taylor reported that the identified savings won't be visible by January 2020 and we won't see the impact of any changes for some time. There will also be a review of Independent Special School placements and movement on this will depend on Headteacher's inclusively being able to accept children back into mainstream and parent's willingness to move their children.

The Forum accepted that all schools would need to work together and that it will take a few years for these changes to come through and for need to spend less is accepted but no one wants this to affect a child's education.

Marie Taylor reported that they would be having to ask all schools how they use their SEN funding. The School and SEN Funding Working Group would meet before the December Forum meeting and the January 2020 Forum meeting.

**Resolved:**

**That Schools Forum support the proposals identified by ISOS in relation to the high needs review in principle and that further reports are brought to Schools Forum in due course.**

**Appendix 1 to Minutes - High Needs Update - Journey so far**

**Appendix 2 to Minutes - Summary of key findings and recommendations**

**Appendix 3 to Minutes - Final Structure**

#### 54 **School Revenue Funding 2020-21**

Grant Davis (Schools Strategic Financial Support Manager) referred to the report circulated with the Agenda which sought to outline and update Schools Forum on the content of the DfE's operational guidance on Schools Revenue Funding for 2020/21. Grant highlighted the following:

- An update to the National Funding Formula (NFF) funding rates are due to be announced in October and this has tended to be towards the end of Term 1;

*Lisa Percy reported that the MP for Chippenham had requested to be at Hardenhuish tomorrow (11 October) and she thought that this might be because an announcement on funding was due to be made then?*

- The elements of the NFF that are to be in place for 2020/21 for mainstream school funding;
- The High Needs NFF will see an increase to all Local Authorities funding of at least 8%, taking account of changes to their 2 to 18-year-old population and the additional £1.1m announced as part of the £125m uplift for 2019/20. For Wiltshire this would mean a minimum increase of £3.76m to the high needs block. There is a gains cap of 17%, which is the maximum increase an Authority could gain. This would equate to a maximum increase of £7.99m which would be a great help. It was anticipated that around a £5.2m uplift would be more likely;
- For the 2020/21 the DfE have confirmed it will be another "soft" funding year and each Authority along with its Schools Forum will be able to determine its school funding formula. The only mandatory factor for 2020/21 will be the application of the minimum per pupil funding levels of £3,750 for primary and £5,000 for secondary schools;
- Indicative funding allocations from the DfE will be made available in October and based upon the October 2018 census.

A Forum Member asked when would the “hard” funding formula be in place? Grant reported that the DfE state that they are “moving towards this”.

Lisa Percy reported that she would endeavour to ask the Chippenham MP tomorrow to see if any further information was known.

**Resolved:**

**That Schools Forum note the contents of the report.**

55 **Annual Schools Consultation - Delegation of Central Expenditure 2020/21 and Transfer of Schools block to High Needs Block 20/21**

Marie Taylor (Head of Finance – Children and Education) referred to the report which sought to seek Schools Forum’s agreement to a set of consultation questions which was due to be sent out to all schools in relation to delegation of central expenditure for 2020/21 and a transfer from schools block to the high needs block.

Marie referred to Appendix 1 which was a tick table, asking maintained schools to indicate their preference around delegation/de-delegation of budgets for central services within the Schools’ Block. Forum Members approved the table as drafted.

Marie reported that it was likely that Schools Forum would be asked to discuss and make a decision regarding a transfer from the Schools’ Block to the high needs block for 2020/21 as well as other plans to reduce the forecast overspend for 2019/20 of £4.864m. It is recommended that we seek the views of all schools on the proposed questions in Appendix 2 which cover a range of options from transferring funding from Schools Block’, using the growth fund estimated surplus in the first instance and reducing the unit values of direct funding levels of support for children and young people.

The Forum considered the questions in Appendix 2 and Marie was asked to incorporate the following:

- i) The detail from the ISOS Action Plan into the background information so the context is understood, and the news is not all “doom and gloom”.
- ii) School’s Forums previously agreed principles regarding school funding and what was agreed to do last year - raised by David Whewell.
- iii) Details about the referral to the Secretary of State so those completing survey can understand the position and be aware of the implications
- iv) Preamble for Schools to contact their Schools Forum’s reps for any further information required

Marie reported that the consultation would be sent out to all Heads/School Business Managers and Governors. The response last year was low and as the response was due by the end of November 2019, all were asked to encourage responses. Helean Hughes would flag this at the forthcoming Headteacher briefings in November.

The Forum asked that the final version of the consultation questions be shared with Neil Baker, Lisa Percy and David Whewell as Schools Forum representatives before issued to schools.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That Schools Forum approved the consultation questions for maintained schools around delegation/de-delegation of budgets for central services within the Schools Block as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 2. That Schools Forum approve the consultation questions set out in Appendix 2 subject to the incorporation of items i) to iv) above with final approval before despatch being sought from Neil Baker, Lisa Percy and David Whewell.**

56 **Government Consultation - Implementing Mandatory Minimum per Pupil Funding Levels**

Grant Davis (School Strategic Financial Support Manager) referred to the report that outlined the content of the DfE's consultation on implementing mandatory minimum per pupil funding levels. Grant highlighted the following:

- Provisional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding will be announced in October (based on October 2018 census details) and full and final details of the funding allocations will be announced in December 2019;
- The DfE launched the consultation on 10 September 2019 and responses must be made by 22 October 2019. The consultation focusses on how best to implement the minimum per pupil funding levels and it raises questions on both technical and operational arrangements and provides an opportunity for respondents to raise wider issues and concerns;
- From 2020/21 there will be a mandatory rise for primary schools and the minimum per pupil level of funding will increase from £3,500 to £3,750 with a rise in secondary schools from £4,800 to £5,000;
- This would mean that in Wiltshire 9% of primary and 50% of secondary schools would be underfunded with these new arrangements – the gains would go to the bigger primary schools and half of Wiltshire's secondary schools. It would also mean that schools with low levels of Deprivation and Prior Attainment funding would benefit and be topped up under these proposals, whereas those more inclusive schools with higher levels of deprivation and low attainment would not gain. It was the feeling of Schools Forum that extra money should be shared around for those that are inclusive and that additional funding would be more fairly distributed through the AWPU and the Additional Educational Needs factors;

*A Forum Member asked if a gains cap would be applied and Grant confirmed that under the NFF a gains cap can still be applied as part of the minimum funding guarantee. The full details are due to be published in December 2019.*

- There are four questions from the DfE as part of the consultation and Officers will draft a response as soon as possible to be shared with the Schools Forum members which they can bear in mind when they complete their own responses.

**Resolved:**

**That Schools Forum note the report and that the Local Authorities response to the DfE's consultation on Implementing mandatory minimum per pupil funding levels be shared with Schools Forum Members in order for responses to be submitted by 22 October 2019.**

57 **Confirmation of Dates for Future Meetings**

The Forum noted that the future meetings would be held on:

12 December 2019  
16 January 2020  
26 March 2020.

58 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

59 **Consideration of Exclusion of Press and Public**

It was resolved that there was no need to exclude the press and public from the meeting as neither were present at the meeting. The report that had been circulated as Part II of the Agenda was now able to be released/shared and so this was considered within Part I of the meeting.

60 **Strategic Review of Support, Services and Provision for Children and Young People with High Needs in Wiltshire - Final report from ISOS Partnership (Part II)**

This report was considered as part of High Needs update (minute number 53) and at the time of the meeting the report was no longer confidential.

(Duration of meeting: 1.30 - 4.55 pm)

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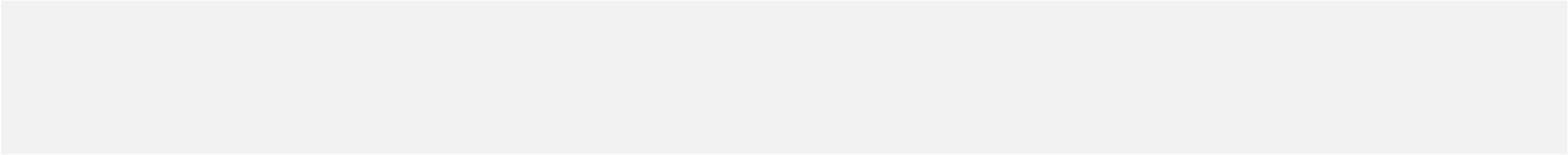
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# The Journey so far....



	2017/18 FY	2018/19 FY	2019/20 FY	2020/21 FY
Timeline & Actions	Jan 18 - Schools Forum did not approve transfer of Schools Block to HNB for 2018/19	HNB Working Group comprising heads & LA officers set up - meetings Autumn Term 2018	Jan 19 - Schools Forum agreed to transfer £2.2m (0.8%) SB to HNB for 2019/20	Sept 19 - national funding announcement nationally; £700bn new money for HNB
		Causal factors identified & reported to SF	£0.3m re-directed from CSSB to HNB	Sept 19 - national funding announcement £14.5 bn new money for Schools over 3 years
		Director Ed & Skills appointed - given lead on SEND	Matt Sambrook appointed to lead on Inclusion for 12 months wef Sept 19	Sept 19 - national funding announcement £3.2 bn teachers pay award over 2% & pension increase over 3 years
		Local Authority £0.2m ringfenced to transform HNB spend	ISOS workshops with schools, parents & LA Interim Report & findings to SF June 19	
		LA commission ISOS external consultants to continue & test	Sept 19 - ISOS Final Report & Recommendations - to SF Oct 2019	
		Autumn 18 - Schools Consulted on Transfer & LA approached to contribute £1.3 million	Local Authority (ISOS) Action Plan launch	
		In year additional HNB from DfE £1.128m	Inclusion & SEN Strategy Drafted - Consulted on Autumn 19 & Finalised Feb 2020	
		CS Case Management System - single database implementation (improved data) £2.7m investment across CSC & Education	Panel Review (external consultant) Final report	
		Nov 18 - Cabinet approved £19m Centre of Excellence in the North	SEN Restructure & move to Education & Skills Nov 19	
		Dec 18 - additional SEN capital - total £1.4m (to now until 20/21) - to create new places in schools	Sept 19 - further System of Excellence consultation with updated plan higher cost - Cabinet November 2019	

	Jan 19 - Special Free School (South) application successful £12m	Update to Local Authority MTFS in progress	
<b>Final HNB Overspend = £1.722m</b>	<b>Final HNB Overspend = £4.735m</b>	<b>Forecast HNB Overspend = £4.864m</b>	<b>Forecast HNB Overspend = TBC</b>
<b>DSG Reserve = POSITIVE £0.846m</b>	<b>DSG Reserve = DEFICIT £2.6m incl £1.3m from LA top up</b>	<b>DSG Reserve = £7.130m deficit</b>	<b>DSG Reserve = TBC</b>



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# Strategic review of support, services and provision for children and young people with high needs in Wiltshire

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Page 21

## Summary of key findings and recommendations

October 2019



## Aims of the review

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**Evidence**: To build an evidence base and collective understanding of how effectively the local system supports young people with high needs.

**Engagement**: To engage a broad range of partners, build consensus and harness collective expertise to shape and implement solutions.

**Shared strategy**: To work co-productively to develop a shared strategic approach.

# How we have approached the project

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Page 23

## Phase 1: Initial scoping

Initial work to understand current context, analyse data and documents, and scope out our evidence-gathering  
(Jan-March 2019)

## Phase 2: In-depth evidence gathering

Broad engagements with key partners to gather feedback and evidence  
(April-May 2019)

## Phase 3: Testing findings and shaping recommendations

Testing findings and shaping recommendations and a future approach through co-production  
(June-July 2019)

## Overarching messages

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### **Wiltshire is well-regarded local SEND and high needs system.**

At the forefront of developments around SEND and high needs (SEND pathfinder, National Exclusions Trial). Positive local area SEND inspection in 2018. High % of EHCPs completed within 20 weeks. Good outcomes for children with SEN in early years, primary and post-16.

### **The system is, however, facing considerable demand and financial pressures.**

Wiltshire is seeing a significant increase in EHCPs, particularly for younger children. The high needs block is overspent and under significant pressure. These trends are not sustainable. It is clear that current arrangements (processes, continuum of support) need to be reconsidered.

### **There is a willingness to forge new relationships and a collective ethos around high needs.**

New leadership of the education agenda has been welcomed. Partners, providers and parents are keen to foster a new, collective ethos, strategy and partnership around high needs. They highlight some “quick wins” to improve confidence in the local system: communication and relationships, rigorous core processes, building capacity and consistent quality of support.

## Overarching messages

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**There is the need to build strong, strategic and co-productive relationships and partnerships with all key partners in the local system.**

It would be a mistake to see the pressures on the high needs block purely as a financial issue. The factors driving these pressures are manifold, complex and inter-related. They are systemic in nature, and the solutions to them will require a whole-system approach.

**There is the need to ensure core processes that govern the day-to-day operation of the system are effective, transparent, and have the confidence of families and professionals.**

Parents and professionals expressed a lack of confidence in the consistency of some of core process that cover access to support (EHC assessments, issuing EHCPs, banding, SEND panel). There needs to be a coherent structure that aligns operations, commissioning and strategy.

**There needs to be a strategically planned continuum of SEND and high needs support, services and provision.**

This will involve ensuring that there are clear and complementary roles for all forms of support, services and provision, how they contribute to the overall strategy and outcomes for the system, which keep pace with changing needs and deliver consistently.

## Six broad themes that we are planning to use to structure our discussions and evidence-gathering

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- ① **Co-production with parents / carers and young people**
- ② **Partnerships working across education, health and care**
- ③ **Identification, assessment and access to support**
- ④ **Building inclusive capacity in mainstream schools and settings, and providing targeted support for inclusion**
- ⑤ **Developing responsive, effective local specialist provision**
- ⑥ **Preparation for adulthood**

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



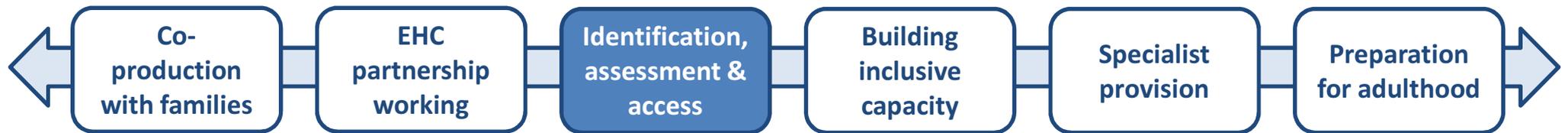
<b>Headline findings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a strong mechanism for <u>strategic engagements</u> with parents, through WPCCC.</li> <li>2. Parents raised concerns about the quality and consistency of <u>communication</u>.</li> <li>3. There are <u>opportunities to strengthen co-productive</u> working with parents and young people – this will be particularly important in taking forward the findings of this review.</li> </ol>
<b>Potential “quick wins”</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Co-production</u> – start discussions with parents about how to take forward the findings from this review. Build a understanding and ownership of the challenges facing the system.</li> <li>2. <u>Young people’s voice</u> – use existing networks of professionals, providers and families to identify “young people advocates”. Start to develop a network of young people to engage on strategic issues facing the system.</li> </ol>
<b>Longer-term actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Co-production</u> – identify some specific, dedicated co-productive projects to undertake with parents and carers. Feedback suggests (a) introductory information about the local SEND system, (b) effective mainstream inclusion and (c) working with families to prepare for adulthood could be the focus of some initial co-productive projects.</li> <li>2. <u>Young people’s voice</u> –develop core routines for having systematic conversations with young people about their aspirations, and use this to inform planning pathways and commissioning.</li> </ol>

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



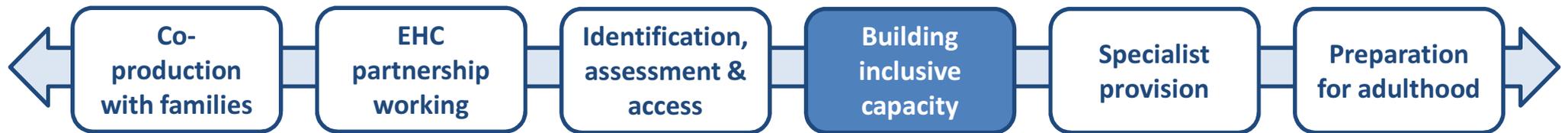
<b>Headline findings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>There were mixed views about the quality of support provided across education, health and care.</u></li> <li>2. <u>There is the need to strengthen joint commissioning across agencies at a strategic level.</u></li> <li>3. <u>There is a perceived lack of join-up between services on a day-to-day level.</u></li> </ol>
<b>Potential "quick wins"</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>The EHC process</u> – revisit and set out clearly how all agencies will contribute to EHC assessments, plans and annual reviews. Co-produce this with parents and professionals.</li> <li>2. <u>Consistent communication</u> – ensure that there is a consistent understanding of and messages about the local system and how it supports young people with SEND and high needs.</li> <li>3. <u>Support for young people with health-related needs</u> – develop and agree protocol.</li> </ol>
<b>Longer-term actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Joint commissioning</u> – strengthen joint commissioning in areas where there are identified gaps in the continuum of support, most notably SEMH, OT and PT. Building on the work that has been well received around the autism pathway, focus on “pathways” for specific needs. Test whether the local offer sets out a seamless joint pathway of support, identify gaps.</li> <li>2. <u>Holistic family support</u> – strengthen links between early help and SEND / high needs support, so that there is an offer of holistic support for families to avoid issues escalating.</li> </ol>

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



<b>Headline findings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professionals were positive about the quality of <u>information</u>, but parents less so.</li> <li>2. There were some concerns about the <u>core systems for identifying young people's needs</u>.</li> <li>3. Strong concerns that <u>support depends on getting medical diagnoses and EHCPs</u>.</li> <li>4. Concerns re: consistency, robustness and transparency of <u>decision-making about support</u>.</li> <li>5. There were also concerns about the <u>paperwork and processes</u> for accessing support.</li> </ol>
<b>Potential "quick wins"</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Information</u> – work with parents to co-produce a refined local offer, building on information already available, but also giving a more strategic overview of the system.</li> <li>2. <u>Access to support</u> – strengthen the panel's work through consistent chairing, consistent application of banding descriptors, reintroducing peer-to-peer moderation from SENCOs, considering thresholds (particularly the low rate of refusal to assess).</li> </ol>
<b>Longer-term actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Access to support</u> – refining the banding framework, developing routes to access time-limited top-up funding without an EHCP, and creating a more responsive support offer.</li> <li>2. <u>Identification</u> – undertake further focused work with health professionals and education providers, as well as other services, to consider what accounts for the high proportion of children with autism as an identified primary need and to ensure the autism pathway is operating effectively to identify young people's needs and bring in support at the right time.</li> </ol>

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



<b>Headline findings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b><u>Mainstream</u></b>: Examples of positive approaches to inclusion in mainstream schools and settings, but the evidence suggests that this is not consistent. Networks required to challenge poor practice and build inclusive capacity need to be strengthened. Transition a concern.</li> <li>2. <b><u>Targeted</u></b>: There was mixed feedback on the offer of targeted services that support inclusion. Overall, there is both the opportunity and the need to reframe the offer of targeted support.</li> </ol>
<b>Potential "quick wins"</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b><u>Mainstream inclusion</u></b> – start a co-productive dialogue with mainstream settings / schools, parents / carers, about principles and hallmarks of good mainstream inclusion in Wiltshire.</li> <li>2. <b><u>SENCO networks</u></b> – re-establish county-wide (locally delivered) SENCO networks, offering a rolling programme of induction and training around county practices and priorities.</li> <li>3. <b><u>Whole-school inclusion</u></b> – share intelligence and join up support re: whole-school inclusion.</li> </ol>
<b>Longer-term actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b><u>Mainstream inclusion</u></b> – continue to develop a set of consistent expectations of mainstream inclusion across Wiltshire. Set this out on the local offer. Build on networks to facilitate school-to-school working. Develop a rolling programme of whole-school inclusion support.</li> <li>2. <b><u>Targeted support</u></b> – consider the current offer of (and potential overlaps within) targeted support. Work with SENCOs and school leaders to co-produce a new offer, with clear aims, consistent models of support, and outcome measures.</li> </ol>

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



<b>Headline findings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Resourced provision</b> – primary “resource bases” seen to be strong feature of the SEND continuum; concerns about join-up with and clarity of “enhanced learning provisions” (ELPs).</li> <li>2. <b>Special school</b> – need for a vision for specialist provision, rooted in the whole continuum of inclusion support and focused on long-term outcomes for young people with SEND.</li> <li>3. <b>AP</b> – at both primary and secondary, concerns about access to alternatives to exclusion.</li> </ol>
<b>Potential “quick wins”</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Resourced provision</b> – start a discussion with secondary schools about the future of the ELPs, linked to the discussion about expectations of mainstream inclusion, define “additionality”.</li> <li>2. <b>Special school provision</b> – refine placement process, banding; enable special schools to develop collective offer for the most complex needs. Tighten INMSS commissioning.</li> <li>3. <b>AP</b> – begin a focused discussions with schools about current AP arrangements.</li> </ol>
<b>Longer-term actions</b>	<p><b>The role of specialist provision as a whole –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that there is a clear vision about the overall role of specialist provisions and the rest of the continuum, with clear processes for commissioning and adapting the offer.</li> <li>• This will require co-productive work with schools and professionals to refine the ELP model and define a clear and consistent offer of resourced provision and special school provision.</li> <li>• This will require considering what will be needed to support young people who might require a placement in an INMSS, and those who could be reintegrated from specialist provision.</li> <li>• Ensure this is understood by all professionals involved in placement decisions.</li> </ul>

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



### Longer-term actions

1. Specialist provision (continued) – ensure that there is a clear and consistent process for specialist providers, mainstream providers and other agencies to work together to identify pupils who could be reintegrated into mainstream school and to support transition.
2. Independent placements – first, strengthen individual placement commissioning (consistent focus on outcomes, on specific support being commissioned, and on transitions). Second, develop a process whereby specialist providers and other services can come together to consider local, bespoke alternatives to independent placements. Third, consider the current in-county offer of specialist provision for pupils with SEMH needs.
3. AP – working with primary and secondary school leaders and other partners, revisit and refine current arrangements around preventing exclusion and the use of AP. We understand further work on this area is planned to start shortly.
4. Commissioning – develop a process of regular, pro-active, strategic discussions with specialist providers individually and collectively about current and anticipated future trends and planned need for provision (not just about numbers of planned places).

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



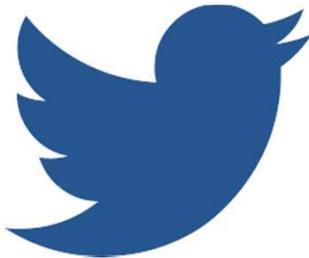
<b>Headline findings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthening and broadening options for young people preparing for adult life was one of the <u>key areas of positive practice</u> within Wiltshire.</li> <li>2. This <u>remains a developing area</u>, with ongoing work required to ensure the local area provides good opportunities for young adults with SEND and high needs.</li> </ol>
<b>Potential “quick wins”</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Developing pathways</u> – continue to build on existing work around education study programmes and supported internships, focusing on routes into employment, strengthening special-school-college transition, and developing the offer from adult social care services.</li> <li>2. <u>Planning processes</u> – develop routines for identifying young people with the most complex needs, requiring some transitional / ongoing support with their care needs.</li> </ol>
<b>Longer-term actions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Joint offer of support</u> – pull together a broader offer of joined-up, seamless support drawing on inputs from education, social care, health and community services. Ensure that this offer is well co-ordinated and jointly owned by professionals.</li> <li>2. <u>Young people’s voice</u> – develop a set of core routines for having systematic conversations with young people about their aspirations, capture this, and use this to inform planning of individual pathways as well as shaping future commissioning priorities.</li> </ol>

## Our details

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[www.isospartnership.com](http://www.isospartnership.com)



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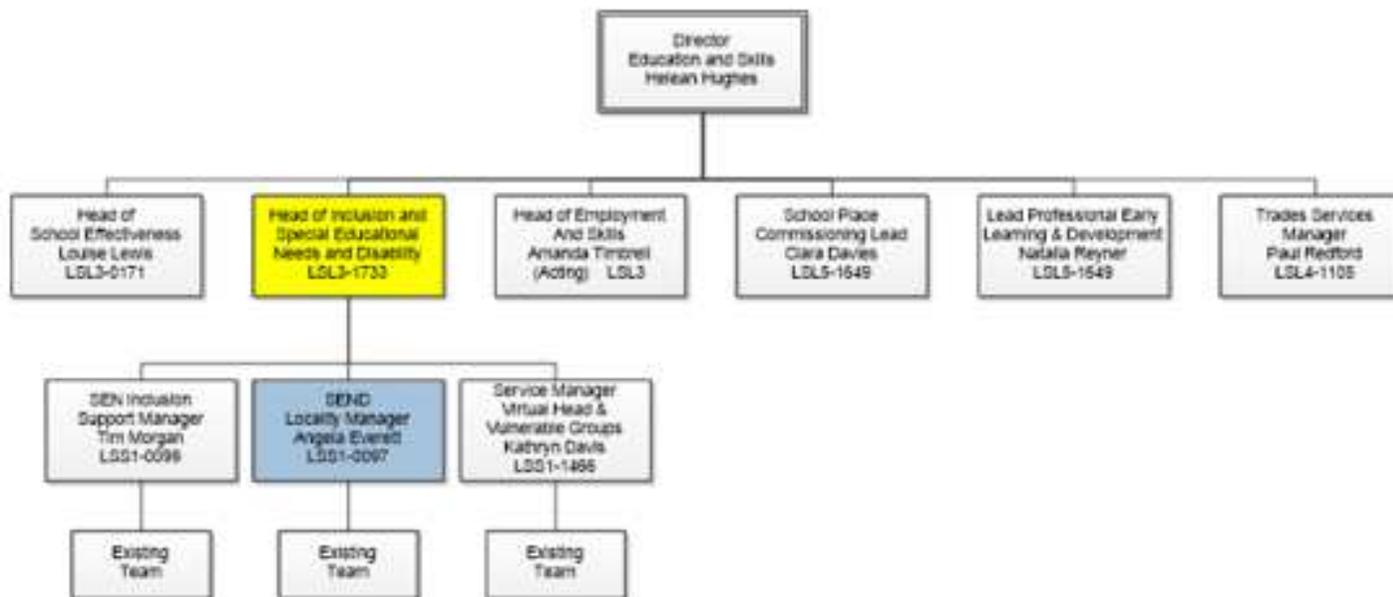
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# Isos- next steps

- Closer alignment with school effectiveness from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019
- Head of Inclusion and SEND

## Final Structure – Education & Skills



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