

<b>Committee:</b>	School Forum
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	5 May 2016
<b>Title:</b>	High Needs Block Update
<b>Author:</b>	Cheryl Sharland
<b>Decision making / consultative / information:</b>	Information

### **What is the Forum being asked to decide?**

1. The Forum is being asked to note the developments and progress being made within the High Needs Block (HNB).

### **Reason for recommendation**

2. It was requested by Forum that updates on the HNB were to be provided to the Forum as a standing item due to the current pressures in this area.

### **Alternative options**

3. This is an information paper after on-going discussions at recent Forum meetings, as such no alternative options are offered.

### **Who will be affected by this decision?**

4. The HNB funding impacts on all Local Authority (LA) Maintained Schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) Special Schools, Academies, other specialist provision, Out of County Placements and Central Special Educational Needs services.

### **Main body of the Report**

#### ***Activities undertaken since last report:***

5. The Bridge post-16 school will open in September 2016. The first admissions panel has been held and 6 places offered.
  
6. We have completed a free school presumption for a new SEMH school in Carlton Colville, and have agreed a preferred sponsor to recommend to the DfE.
  
7. Building on previous work to review the future of specialist educational provision in Suffolk, we completed an Options Review between 11 January and 7 February 2016. This afforded us the opportunity to seek further views on Specialist Support Centres, Residential Provision in MLD Special Schools and Alternative Provision. The information gathered is informing the development of consultation proposals on these areas of our existing provision.
  
8. As we gathered a lot of new information from the Options Review, we agreed that we should take more time than originally proposed to explore the impact of any proposed changes and develop our consultation proposals. Our current proposed revised timetable for the consultation is set out below:

<b>23 May – 3 July 2016</b>	Six week formal consultation period whereby people can make representations to the Council that can be both expressions of support as well as objections to the proposals. This is the final opportunity for people and organisations to make their views known.
Consultation briefing sessions will take place during this period including special arrangements to ensure we capture the voice and opinions of children and young people.	
<b>3 July - 12 Sep 2016</b>	Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills will consider any representations in response to the notice and will decide whether to proceed with the proposal(s).
<b>13-Sep-16</b>	Outcome of final consultation presented to Cabinet.
<b>14-Sep-16</b>	Subject to final Cabinet Member ratification of the outcomes, a public notice will be published at any affected schools and local communities.

***Planning for future need:***

9. The research and engagement activities we have undertaken to date provide evidence to suggest that our range of existing specialist educational provision does not meet current or future need.
  
10. If we do nothing, there will be increased financial pressure on the High Needs Block for a number of reasons including:
  - increasing numbers of pupils needing to be placed in high cost out of authority placements;

- increased transport costs to travel to specialist provision some distance from home;
  - increasing referrals to Alternative Provision/education other than at school (EOTAS).
11. We also know that a lack of appropriate local specialist educational provision leads to poorer outcomes for SEND learners, and increased gaps in attainment. It can disrupt family life as some learners have to live away from home, severing their support from, and links with, their local communities.
12. Changes are needed in our specialist educational provision to:
- improve levels of educational attainment for children and young people with additional needs, ensuring that they attend good or outstanding provision;
  - ensure that the pattern of specialist educational provision is appropriate and reflects the profile of need of vulnerable learners in Suffolk;
  - wherever possible, ensure vulnerable learners are able to access good quality local educational provision (the education local offer);
  - ensure that opportunities for inclusion are maximised.
13. We will also need to continue to increase targeted support to mainstream schools to support inclusion.
14. We will develop a five year plan for pupils aged 5-19 years to inform the development of local provision to respond to the changing profile of need and achieve our ambition for vulnerable learners to be able to access quality local education provision. The plan will be developed and overseen by the Education and Learning Infrastructure Plan Board.
15. The SEND Further Education and Learning Committee is the strategic group that will oversee the development of a high quality, local, post16 learning offer that can meet the needs of all young people with SEND across Suffolk. It will be the place where providers can collaborate to deliver the best possible learning offer for young people. The committee will develop and oversee the implementation of a post 16 local learning offer plan for Suffolk that will aim to match the local learning offer to the future needs of young people with SEND and ensure that programmes are tailored to support young people to progress towards their goals in adulthood.

**Challenges:**

16. The number of school aged children and young people is growing as the county sees spikes in localised population growth, net increases in immigration and a large amount of new developments for the revitalised housing market. Pupil forecasts show the total school population will

increase by over 4,500 (5%) in the next 5 years. Within this growth there are particular growth 'hot spots' such as Ipswich, North Lowestoft and Forest Heath. (Source: Suffolk JSNA, citing ONS (2013), Suffolk County Council (2014) and Suffolk County Council (2015)).

17. Recent years have seen a significant increase in the number of pupils with a diagnosis of ASD or SEMH requiring access to specialist education provision. This trend is expected to continue over the next 5 years due to population growth and increased diagnosis rates.
18. Demographic and increasing complexity of need means we will need to increase the number of special school places by 2020.
19. The Department for Education launched a consultation on High Needs funding formula and other reforms on 7 March 2016 which will have implications for the local authority. It is not clear at this stage whether the reforms will deliver increased funding for the High Needs block in Suffolk and if so, it may take at least five years before a fair funding settlement is received. However, it has been stated that the government will make at least £200 million available for bids for capital funding to support the expansion of existing specialist educational provision as well as the development of new schools. If this is allocated equitably across the country, Suffolk's share would be in the region of only £2 million, which would be far short of what we need to develop local specialist educational provision.