

**Agenda item 3**

**Education – SEND Capital Programme 2024-2025**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to share with the Schools Forum an update on the High Needs Provision Capital Programme.

**Recommendations**

2. The Schools Forum is asked to note the paper.

**Introduction and Context**

3. The High Needs Provision capital programme supports the development of the educational environment by improving, enlarging or replacing assets in a planned and structured way so that children and young people learn in the best possible environment. This continues to contribute to raising educational standards, improving school attendance and young people's involvement in positive activities as well as making buildings more energy efficient and fit for purpose. Schools that are well maintained can inspire children and young people to achieve and can enable teachers to concentrate on teaching and learning.

**Capital Programme Update – High Needs Capital funding**

4. High Needs capital funding is allocated to local authorities to support the provision of new places and improve existing provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities or requiring alternative provision. This includes maintained schools, free schools or academies and by establishing new schools. Since 2023-24, the allocations have been based 50% on the LA's population and 50% on forecasts submitted to DfE of pupil numbers in future years (SCAP) to establish whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate those pupils.
5. In Cheshire West and Chester we have qualified to receive the following amounts of basic need funding over a 7 year period;

<b>Year</b>	<b>£'m</b>	<b>Funding</b>
2018-2019	0.31	Special Provision fund
2019-2020	0.31	Special Provision fund
2020-2021	0.31	Special Provision fund
2021-2022	1.08	High Needs Capital Allocation
2022-2023	5.69	High Needs Capital Allocation
2023-2024	4.70	High Needs Capital Allocation
2024-2025	1.23	High Needs Capital Allocation

6. The 2023-24 and 2024-25 allocations have generated utilising the following information. Population; DfE have taken the January 2023 school census, to calculate the total number of pupils from year R to year 11 inclusive to arrive at a comparable population size for each LA. Forecasted demand; the DfE have taken the number of CYP currently educated in specialist places is taken from the 2023 Special Educational Needs survey (SEN2) where CYP aged 4 to 19 inclusive and attending a special school, SEN Unit or resourced provision within mainstream schools or AP/PRU. • The capacity of special schools and SEN units or resourced provision within mainstream as reported in SCAP 2023.

### **Grant Conditions**

7. The grant is technically un-ring-fenced, meaning the only formal requirement placed on it is that it must be used for capital expenditure and not revenue. However, The DfE state that they want to work alongside local authorities to reform the current system and achieve the shared endeavour to secure a financially sustainable high needs system. The SEND Improvement Plan will be the vehicle for some of these changes although with the increased level of capital investment being made available, the DfE also expect local authorities to have had a keen eye on the efficiencies that need to be made by 2025 and to invest their capital allocations accordingly. Funding beyond 2025 is contingent on the outcomes of future Spending Reviews and additional capital funding beyond this period cannot be guaranteed; it is therefore critical that prudent decisions are taken now to ensure the sustainability of the system for the longer-term.

### **Cheshire West & Chester Capital Programme SEND 2018-2025**

8. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategic Review carried out in 2019. During this review there was extensive engagement and dialogue with a wide range of partners including mainstream and special school leaders and governing bodies, local FE colleges, the parent carer forum and a range of partners including health and social care colleagues which culminated in formal public consultation carried out between 20th June to 12th September 2019 and including three public events.
9. Feedback from this engagement highlighted the need for additional facilities within mainstream schools to facilitate young people with ASC. This informed the creation of initial capital investment schemes. These can be seen in appendix 1.
10. The advent of the Coronavirus pandemic delayed many of the recommendations from being implemented and there was a subsequent 'sense-check' of the recommendations between March and July 2022 to ensure these remained valid.
11. Whilst the sense check was underway a SEND Transformation Project Group was formed. The group identified gap in SEND provision places for Sept 2022 that would need to be progressed ahead of the independent review and capital projects commissioned to support this. These can be seen in appendix 1.
12. The independent sense check review concluded and identified the need for;

<b>Original Targets for Recommendation 4a</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>Total</b>
Primary resource provision - increase by 64 places, bases per year 23-26	21	21	22	<b>64</b>
Secondary resource provision - increase by 36 places	18	18		<b>36</b>
Special school satellites - increase by 44 places	22	22		<b>44</b>
Post 16 Places (not specified by year)				<b>70</b>

13. The review also considered the structure for the council's SEND pupil place planning process, determining that the SEND team manage the sufficiency of places including data forecasting, determination of need and the commissioning the Education capital team for the delivery of capital projects where additional places are required.
14. Through two rounds of seeking expression of interests several schemes have been approved to deliver additional places across the school estate. These can be seen in appendix 1.

## Appendix 1

### SEND Capital programme

<b>Schemes</b>	<b>Delivered yes/no</b>	<b>No. Places</b>
Various projects to support ASC in mainstream schools	Yes	n/a
Improvements to RP provision in Chester	Yes	n/a
Special School expansion Chester	No	8
Special School expansion Chester	Yes	16
Special School Satellite Chester	No	16
EOI – RP expansion Chester	Yes	17
EOI – RP creation Ellesmere Port	Yes	20
EOI – RP improvements Chester	Yes	n/a
EOI – RP improvements Winsford	Yes	n/a
EOI – RP expansion Chester	No	5
EOI – RP creation Northwich	No	7
EOI – RP creation Winsford	No	10
EOI – RP expansion Frodsham	No	9
EOI – RP creation Northwich	No	16
EOI – Special School expansion Ellesmere Port	Yes	10
EOI – Special School expansion Northwich	No	14
EOI – Special School expansion Winsford	No	8