

To all members of the Sunderland Schools Forum

Together for Children
Sunderland
City Hall – Level 2
Plater Way
Sunderland
SR1 3AA

Date: 9th October 2024
Our TFC-SF/ZW

Dear Colleague

SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Schools Forum, scheduled for Thursday 17th October 2024 at 8.30 am. The meeting will be held virtually, and a Teams appointment has been circulated.

AGENDA

24/53	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	
24/54	Declarations of Interest	
24/55	Minutes of Previous Meeting School Forum meeting, held on 19 th September 2024 (attached)	
24/56	Matters Arising from the Minutes/Agreed Actions (Action Log attached)	
24/57	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion • Quality Assurance Processes for Service Providers • DBV Funding: Probity (update on working group arrangements) • Pupil Numbers (update on working group arrangements) • Transport • Attendance/Elective Home Education 	KR SM SM/PR KR KR SM/KR
24/58	Presentations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Place Planning – Projections 2024/2029 (presentation attached) 	AR
24/59	Reports for Discussion and Decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning of Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) Placements (copy attached) <p>Voting: 5 (All)</p>	PR
24/60	Any Other Business	

24/61	Date and Time of Next Meeting 21 st November 2024 at 8.30 am	
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Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Zena Wilkinson
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Governor Support Team
Together for Children
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				<u>VOTING RIGHTS</u>				
SCHOOL MEMBERS				1	2	3	4	5
1.	Maintained Primary School Headteacher (Mandatory)			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Maintained Primary Schools South Headteacher	Catherine Jones – Headteacher	Thorney Close Primary School	No voting rights: the views of the individual Primary Headteacher Clusters Groups will be put forward by the Maintained Primary Schools representative. In the event of the Maintained Primary School Teacher absence a Deputy will be appointed to share the views of the individual Primary Headteacher Cluster Groups.				
	Maintained Primary Schools North Headteacher	Lisa Wood - Headteacher	Hylton Castle Primary School					
	Maintained Primary Schools Washington Headteacher	Sara Bainbridge - Headteacher	Barmston Village Primary School					
	Maintained Primary Schools Hetton/Houghton Headteacher	Nicola Hill - Headteacher	Hetton Primary					
2.	Maintained Special School Teacher (Mandatory)	James Waller – Headteacher: CHAIR	Sunningdale School	Y	Y		Y	Y
3.	Maintained Nursery Headteacher (Mandatory)	Ailsa Higgins - Headteacher	Hetton Lyons/ Usworth	Y	Y		Y	Y
4.	Maintained Pupil Referral Service Headteacher (Mandatory)	Donna Walker - Headteacher	Link School	Y	Y		Y	Y
5.	Maintained Faith School Headteacher/Representative	Anne Blakey-Headteacher	St Benet's RC Primary School	Y	Y		Y	Y
6.	Maintained Sector School Governor	Michael Hartnack - Governor	Grange Park Primary School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Emma Jarvis – Headteacher (Hetton/Houghton)	Dubmire Primary		Y		Y	Y
8.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Audrey Bolam – Headteacher (Washington)	Oxclose Primary		Y		Y	Y
9.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	John Lines – Headteacher (Washington)	Columbia Academy		Y		Y	Y
10.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Lauren Reeves – COO (South)	Vision Learning Trust (Hillview)		Y		Y	Y
11.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Ruth Whiteside – Headteacher (South)	Barnes Primary Academy		Y		Y	Y
12.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Mandy Henderson - SBM	Ryhope Infant Academy		Y		Y	Y
13.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Vacant			Y		Y	Y
14.	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior	Vacant			Y		Y	Y
15.	Academy Secondary and All Through	David Amos	Academy 360		Y		Y	Y
16.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Madeline Hope – Director of Finance	Bishop Chadwick Education Trust		Y			Y
17.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Dean Juric - Headteacher	St Roberts Academy		Y			Y
18.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Andrew Carr – Director of Finance	Biddick Academy		Y			Y
19.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Joanne Maw – Chief Executive officer	Aspire Learning Trust		Y			Y
20.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Phil Smith – Chief Finance Officer	Castleview Academy		Y			Y
21.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Vicki Pinkney - Headteacher	Hetton Academy		Y			Y
22.	Academy Secondary and All Through	Colin Devlin – VICE CHAIR	Kepier Academy		Y			Y
23.	Academy Special (Mandatory)	Mick Little – Chief Operations Manager	Ascent		Y			Y

NON SCHOOL MEMBERS								
24.	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries	David Martin	Chilton Moor Nursery		**		Y	Y
25.	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries	Michelle Barr, Nursery owner and Manger	Buttons Nursery Washington		**		Y	Y
26.	Post 16 Provision	Vikki Morton	Sunderland College					Y
27.	Teacher Associations	Andy Lewis						Y
28.	Roman Catholic Diocese	Vacant						Y
29.	Church of England Diocese	David Airey - Headteacher	Venerable Bede CE Academy					Y

TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN OFFICERS & COUNCILLORS								
	Head of Accounting and Finance	Deborah Orr						
	Director of Education	Simon Marshall						
	Strategic Service Lead – Education	Kim Richardson						
	Lead Member Children's Services	Cllr M Butler						
	Lead Member Children's Services Deputy – No longer applicable							

MEMBERSHIP VOTING RIGHTS		
1	Scheme for Financing Schools (Maintained)	
2	Schools Block Funding Formula	
3.	De-delegation maintained schools	
4.	Early Years Single Funding Formula	
5.	All other School Forum Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Central expenditure relating to schools block b. Deficits on central expenditure to be funded from following year's DSG. c. Voting procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-delegation maintained secondary removed as no longer pertinent 		
** PVI representatives can vote on the consultation on the funding formula only.		

SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday 19th September 2024 at 8.30 am

School Forum Member Attendance

Voting

James Waller (JW) - Chair	Maintained Special School Teacher
David Airey (DA)	Church of England Diocese
David Amos (DAm)	Academy Secondary and all Through
Michelle Barr (MB)	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries
Ann Blakey (ABI)	Maintained Faith School Headteacher/Representative
Audrey Bolam (AB)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Jenny Bowen (JB) on behalf of Dean Juric	Academy Secondary and All Through
Colin Devlin (CD)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Michael Hartnack (MH)	Maintained Primary – Governor
Mandy Henderson (MHe)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Madeline Hope (MHo)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Catherine Jones	Maintained Primary School Headteacher
Andy Lewis (AL)	Teacher Association
John Lines (JL)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
David Martyn (DM)	Private, Voluntary & Independent Nurseries
Vicky Pinkney (VP)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Lauren Reeves (LR)	Academy Primary, Infants and Junior
Phil Smith (PS)	Academy Secondary and All Through
Donna Walker (DW)	Maintained pupil Referral Services Headteacher

Non-Voting

Lisa Wood (LW)	Maintained Primary School Headteacher
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Together for Children Officers and Councillors

Cllr John Butler (JB)	Lead Member Children's Services
Richard Cullen (RC)	TfC Strategic Lead – School Improvement and Early Years
Debra Dixon	TfC Team Manager, Management Accounting Team
John Hope (JH)	TfC Technical Accountant Education Funding
Deborah Orr (DO)	TfC Head of Accounting and Finance
Emma Leech (EL)	TfC Finance Business Partner
Leigh Morris (LN)	TfC Team Manager, School Finance
Emma Nolan (EN)	TfC Finance Business Partner
Kimberley Richardson (KR)	TfC Strategic Service Manager
Pamela Robertson (PR)	TfC Strategic SEND Lead
Gemma Slater (GS)	TfC Trainee Accounting Technician
Zena Wilkinson	Schools Forum Clerk

School Forum Non-Member Attendance

Sarah Chapman (SC)	Balmoral Learning Trust
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		Agreed Action
24/42	<p><u>Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair – Term of Office 1 Year</u></p> <p>The Clerk confirmed a quorum was present and the meeting could proceed to business.</p> <p>The Clerk invited nominations/expressions of interest for the position of Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>James Waller put forward an expression of interest for the position of Chair and Colin Devlin put forward an expression of interest for the position of Vice Chair.</p> <p>Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To appoint JW as Chair for a term of office of 1 year. - To appoint CD as Vice Chair for a term of office of 1 year. 	
24/43	<p><u>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>The Clerk advised that apologies for absence had been submitted by Mrs Bainbridge, Mr Carr, Mrs Higgins, Miss Jarvis, Mr Juric (Jenny Bowen in attendance as his representative), Mr Little, Mr Marshall and Mrs Whiteside.</p> <p>The Clerk advised that nominations to join the membership of the Sunderland Schools Forum had been received for Mrs Vicky Pinkney, as a representative for Academy Secondary and All Through (as Mrs Hegarty was no longer eligible to be a member), and Mandy Henderson (Schools Business Manager) as a representative for Academy Primary, Infants and Junior. The Clerk confirmed the nominations had been agreed within the relevant Headteacher Cluster meetings. Members accepted the nominations.</p> <p>Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To appoint VP, Hetton Academy, to represent Academy Secondary and All Through. - To appoint MH, Ryhope Infant Academy, to represent Academy Primary, Infants and Junior. 	
24/44	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>MH advised that as an elected Councillor he would declare declarations throughout the meeting, if appropriate.</p> <p>Members NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were no declarations of interest in relation to the business to be considered. - Declarations could be made throughout the meeting, if appropriate. 	

24/45	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting</u></p> <p>Members RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To accept the minutes of the Sunderland Schools Forum (SSF) held 4th July 2024 as a true record. 	
24/46	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes/Agreed Actions</u></p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p> <p>Agreed Actions:</p> <p>SF members confirmed they had received a copy of the Action Log prior to the meeting for consideration and the actions of the meeting were reviewed in detail.</p>	Copy attached
24/47	<p><u>Review of the Effectiveness of the Sunderland School Forum</u></p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the schedule for meetings had been drafted in line with Headteacher Cluster meetings, to ensure full consideration and feedback on proposals was available.</p>	
24/48	<p><u>Feedback from Short Life Working Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport <p>KR advised members that there had been some changes implemented and work continued around enhancing the independent travel offer. KR advised that the 2 new appointments, to the Transport Team, were going well and the Team continued to roll out their communication strategy, to parents, to encourage support.</p> <p>KR informed Members that 2 mini buses had been purchased (funded from Sunderland City Council's Low Carbon initiative). KR provided an overview of how the mini buses would be used, stating that it was hoped the mini buses would reduce pressure on the current transport system and overall road traffic. KR explained that a review of the mini bus usage would be undertaken at the end of the academic year.</p> <p>MH questioned the expected impact in terms of the need to utilise taxis and KR advised that there were in year savings projected and next year (when the re-tendering process was revisited) there should be evidence of tangible savings, especially in relation to wheelchair users. KR explained that the mini buses would be used to transport pupils, which should reduce the need to use taxis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion <p>KR advised that the next meeting of the above forum was scheduled for 4th October 2024. KR explained that this was a multi-agency networking and information sharing group, to consider some of the challenges encountered across the City.</p>	

KR shared that Mr R Bell, from Consilium Evolve, had been invited to present information on the sensory and visual process work they had implemented.

KR extended an open invitation to SSF members to attend the Inclusion Forum (4th October 2024 at 9.30 am to 11.30 am: venue Main Hall, Bunny Hill Centre).

KR advised that Mrs Louise Harrison, TfC Educational Psychologist, would also be attending; to provide advice in relation to identifying Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and trauma and details of where in-depth clinical support was available: KR explained that diagnosis for ADHD and trauma was difficult, as the symptoms presented were very similar. JW stated that he believed this advice would be beneficial for SENDCo's, as these areas were amongst the least understood. KR agreed and shared that one of the key messages of the information which would be shared was the fact that diagnosis was difficult.

- Quality Assurance Processes for Service Providers

KR advised that there was no update to present at the meeting.

- Delivering Better Value (DBV) Funding: Probity

PR advised members that a formal visit and monitoring process had been implemented and presented the following presentation:

- Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND: Update September 2024
- Monitoring Visit – Summary and Feedback

PR highlighted that the DfE had implemented a variant of the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating, advising that the following workstreams had been monitored:

1. Training and Development: Development of a comprehensive and co-produced training officer to support education settings and practitioners within the local area to ensure all stakeholders have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities within the SEND system. Rated Amber/Green.

PR explained that a training needs analysis would be developed, and shared with stakeholders, to inform the development of the training schedule.

PR shared that Rachel Wilcox, from NHS England, was to deliver training on statutory advice to the providers of Health Advice.

PR explained that this work had also led to the development of a revised Education Health Care (EHC) plan template, which was currently being reviewed by the statutory SEND Team.

2. Inclusion: Strengthening Quality Assurance and multi-agency working within statutory processes to improve the quality of assessments and annual reviews, so better outcomes can be achieved.

A new co-produced Quality Assurance Framework.

Developing a commonly understood and co-produced universal offer.

Work would also include fostering the development of innovative practice in terms of an inclusive curriculum, including those children and young people with more complex needs. Rated Amber/Green.

PR reported that TfC had successfully recruited to the Bespoke Education Team and work had already begun in terms of identifying children and young people and the broad support required from this Team. PR stated that team members had started to work with some of the more complex children within Sunderland, exemplifying utilising the alternative provision resource at East Boldon Riding Centre (EBRC) but reiterated this provision was for children with complex needs, whose needs would not be met within mainstream education.

PR advised that a new version of the Early Years SEND Ranges had been developed, together with a revised Early Years Inclusion Fund offer.

3. Digital, Data and Communication: Drive system improvement through the enhancement of our digital capability to improve data at a local area system level and to ensure clear, accessible information is available to children, young people, and families/carers. Rated Amber/Red.

PR reported that TfC had struggled to appoint to the of Digital Data and Communication Lead and they were now looking at potential secondment opportunities.

PR advised that the SEND Media Officer had been appointed and was already evidencing a good impact in relation to the local offer.

4. Transition: Developing a consistent and robust transition pathway for children and young people in the local area with SEND. Rated Amber/Green

- Progress Towards Dedicated School Grant (DSG) Management Plan:

PR reported that TfC were on track in terms of their existing mitigations within the DSG, explaining that the Hudson Road Primary School social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) alternative resource provision (ARP) was due to open in September, and the Mill Hill Primary School Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Unit. PR explained that these resources provided additional capacity in line with the proposals put

<p>forward at previous School Forum meetings, which included the proposals to increase admission numbers for Harry Watts, Sunningdale and Columbia Grange schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruitment Update <p>PR presented details of the current recruitment position, in terms of positions filled and outstanding vacancies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other Activity <p>PR advised members that successful consultancy work had been funded by the Department for Education (DfE), from Dingley’s Promise (for 3 days), which would focus on work with Early Years (EY) partners to increase inclusivity.</p> <p>Members were advised that ongoing work was being undertaken with Family Hubs, Public Health and ICB, to develop consistent EY offers and approaches, in terms of speech, language and communication.</p> <p>PR explained that in terms of whole education a Self-Evaluation and Improvement Project (with up to 28 schools) had been implemented and dates were diarised. PR shared that the Project would be supported by Senior Leader secondments and interviews for the posts were scheduled.</p> <p>PR stated that a Quality Assurance Audit Tool plan was in place, which would include a multi-agency audit, planned for 20th September 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DBV – SEND Transformation <p>PR presented the DBV Send Transformation Governance Structure for members information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress Monitoring Arrangements <p>PR explained that the next monitoring meeting was scheduled for October 2024 and she believed TfC would be able to demonstrate expenditure, which included staffing costs and the purchase of the Cambridge Wellbeing Check.</p> <p>PR invited questions or comments on the information presented.</p> <p>DW stated that she felt the work implemented was phenomenal and highly commended the resource at Hudson Road Primary School. DW questioned if any similar options had been put forward from secondary schools. PR confirmed that no secondary schools had come forward to express an interest in opening an SEMH ARP at the moment but stated that she was open to proposals. DW questioned who secondary schools should contact to discuss potential options and PR extended an open invitation for secondary schools to contact her directly or Mr Alan Rowan, Capital Sufficiency Lead, explaining that any proposals would be considered in line with capital available. DW</p>	<p>DW</p>
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	<p>agreed to raise secondary SEMH ARP provisions within the next Secondary Headteacher Meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Numbers <p>KR advised members that Mr Rowan had drafted a presentation for SSF in terms of the pupil number projections and she would arrange for copies of the presentation to be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance/Elective Home Education (EHE) Working Party <p>KR confirmed that the SSF had agreed to the additional funding to create a small sub team within the Attendance Team, to better manage the EHE referrals. KR reported that EHE cases had increased expedientially, explaining that there were now 600 children being EHE'd, with 12 further notifications of pupils being EHE'd received from September 2024.</p> <p>KR explained that there were no identified themes for the moves to EHE but she believed the current situation evidenced that number of children being EHE'd would not be slowing down and evidenced the need for additional support.</p> <p>KR advised members that one member of the sub team was a qualified Teacher, who would provide support and guidance to parents in terms of educational needs, but also in terms of ensuring parents understood the width of curriculum subjects required to be taught.</p> <p>KR highlighted that TfC had to work in line with the set guidance for EHE, which was limited, but shared that hopefully this would be improved going forward.</p> <p>KR acknowledged the inherent risks with EHE, as the children were not seen daily.</p> <p>KR explained that within the broader remit the Attendance Working Group would look to work with multi-agency partners to implement a Charter, which everyone could sign up to, and the Charter would identify roles for wider services. KR confirmed that a consultation process would be implemented in relation to the content of Charter.</p>	KR
24/49	<p><u>Presentations</u></p> <p>Members NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This item of business had been considered in detail within 24/47 Feedback from Short Life Working Groups. 	
24/50	<p><u>Reports for Discussion and Decision</u></p> <p>The Clerk advised that all SF members were entitled to vote in relation to the reports/proposals being presented.</p> <p>Members agreed to change the order of business.</p>	

- Foundation of Light Primary Intervention Programme

Members confirmed they had received a copy of the follow report prior to the meeting for consideration:

- Foundation of Light Primary Intervention Programme (dated 19th September 2024).

KR advised that the Foundation of Light (FoL) delivered a Primary Intervention Programme (PIP) during the academic year 2023/24 and the report circulated was to seek approval for TfC to commission a further 5 places at the provision for the academic year 2024/45. KR explained that the programme provided intervention for Key Stage 2 pupils who presented with Range 2 behaviours on the SEND SEMH range.

KR stated that a review of the outcomes from 2023/24 had been undertaken, sharing that attendance was good and positive feedback had been received in relation to the support provided.

KR explained that the actual numbers attending the resource were smaller than expected, in terms of throughput, but some placements had been extended due to individual circumstances.

KR informed members that the cost of the placements would not increase and the overall number of placements would increase from 5 to 10.

CJ advised the meeting that the South Primary Headteacher (SPH) Forum had discussed this proposal in detail and 3 schools had identified that they had used the placements. CJ stated that the Headteachers had queried whether this provision could be reviewed, as it was felt the FoL managed the EY ranges well but further work was required in relation to the curriculum, quality assurance and re-integration process. KR acknowledged the potential difficulties around the proposal, in terms of staff and skills/knowledge bases around early intervention and support and highlighted that there were other provisions across the City. KR explained that placements at FoL could be considered in relation to pre-Link School provisions, if needed.

KR advised noted the request to review transition processes, sharing that she would be keen to receive further information, sharing that FoL were open to proposals. KR suggested scheduling a meeting with CJ to discuss further and CJ accepted the proposal.

CJ/KR

JW invited members, by a show of hands, to vote on the proposal put forward.

Following a vote Members RESOLVED:

- To agree the proposal to commission 10 places, at the FoL, for the academic year 2024/25.

- East Boldon Riding Centre (EBRC) Alternative Provision

Members confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting for consideration:

- EBRC Alternative Provision (dated 19th September 2024)

KR explained that the EBRC Alternative Provision proposal was for pupils within Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

KR acknowledged that the EBRC proposals had been considered in detail within the Secondary Headteacher Forum, held on 18th September 2024.

KR advised SSF members that the Link School were full and Tfc had used all available spaces to increase admission numbers, and these places had all been allocated for pupils who had been permanently excluded. KR advised that there was no flexibility in terms of the Behaviour Support provision, for 12 week placements. KR stated that due to the current situation Tfc had needed to consider strategies available to allow the Link School with time to free up placements.

KR explained that the proposals put forward were:

1. To agree to commissioning a minimum of 20 places at EBRC for the academic year.
2. To agree a proposal to offer access, to an additional 15 placements at EBRC to Sunderland schools via the Vulnerable Pupil Panel (VPP).

KR explained that the second proposal would be for pupils above Key Stage 2 which would not place additional strains in relation to supporting children, including those pupils at risk of being permanently excluded.

KR informed members that Tfc representatives had worked collectively with partners to look to see how they could bridge the gap in alternative provisions and it was felt that EBRC would provide the support required. KR stated that EBRC already worked with schools within the Sunderland area and the Virtual School.

KR advised members that EBRC was not Ofsted registered, therefore the provision proposal would be for 3 days placements. KR assured members that a significant due diligence process had been implemented and work would be implemented to enable EBRC to become Ofsted registered.

KR shared that EBRC provided a high calibre of both curriculum and vocational training, but acknowledged the branding of EBRC could be viewed as a concern. KR stated that EBRC provided a blend of vocational activities, which included:

- Equestrian Studies
- Hair and Beauty
- Construction Skills

- Forestry Skills
- Sports and Nutrition

SF members were advised that each course was structured and included industry accredited qualifications to support the development of pupils skills in readiness for life Post16, and these qualification opportunities were not offered by other provisions.

KR reported that placements at EBRC were more cost effective that the placement costs for either Future Pathways or Evolve Sports (EBRC daily rate £80; Future Pathways daily rate £175 and Evolve Sports daily rate £125). KR highlighted that this would provide 20 high quality provision placement for an overall cost of £187,200.

KR informed SF members that the options going forward were to agree the commissioned places at EBRC or continue to use ad hoc placements at other placements. KR stated that from her perspective the proposal being put forward was cost effective.

CD stated that he believed additional placements were needed but he would query whether, as referrals were considered through the VPP, this could create “bun fights” for places; CD stated he would also query whether the proposals put forward would stop schools accessing the provisions available independently. KR advised that from her understanding EBRC would prefer to commission LA placements but would retain some placements so their wider business would not be monopolised. KR stated that the proposal to commission the placements should not impact independent school placement arrangements.

PS stated that he agreed with CD’s comments, sharing that the proposed scheme appeared good, and cost effective. PS stated that there was a need for SSF members to consider expenditure, acknowledging that there was nearly as much within the High Needs Block (HNB) as the School Block (SB). PS stated that he would support the proposal as long as the placements were meeting children’s needs. PS informed members that he believed there was a resource need for alternative provisions to provide respite opportunities.

CJ advised that the report was considered with in the South Primary Headteacher (SPH) Forum and Headteachers felt that there was a need to look at transition arrangements going forward.

DW highlighted that the proposal being put forward was for a temporary placements as, in time, the pupils would transition to the Link School. DW explained that historically any pupils permanently excluded would move to the Link School and stated that a lot of work had been undertaken in relation to transition processes.

KR reiterated that the proposal being put forward would be a short term measure to address the crisis situation within

KR advised that following further negotiation the cost of the daily rate for EBRC had been reduced to £75 per day.

alternative provisions and the pupils who would be considered for these placements were already within the AP system. KR advised that TFC were at risk of being non-compliant in terms of their statutory responsibilities because of the lack of provisions available to meet pupil needs.

KR advised that she was a member of a variety of different groups/forums and she had seen evidence of the impact a lack of appropriate resources had, exemplifying the impact on gang violence.

KR reiterated that placements at Future Pathways equated to £175 per day and £125 for Evolve Sports, stating she believed the offers available at EBRC were far superior and more structured.

DA confirmed that the proposal had been considered in detail within the Secondary Headteacher Forum and, although it was acknowledged how hard KR had worked to identify additional alternative provisions, Secondary Headteachers voted not to accept the proposal from a safeguarding perspective. DA shared that Headteachers acknowledged the need for additional provisions to meet children's needs. KR confirmed DA's comments, sharing that the predominant concern from Secondary Headteachers was how schools could manage the potential message relayed (to pupils) in relation to the provision offer. KR stated that she had clarified that a placement at ERBC would not be an automatic process following a permanent exclusion and any attempt to try to manipulate gaining a placement into a specific alternative provision was closely managed. KR highlighted that if a child was permanently excluded one option available was to place them within another mainstream school, rather than an alternative provision, and shared that she felt this message was more easily managed within schools, rather than the potential of not having appropriate placements. KR reiterated her assurance that pupils permanently excluded would not be given a "free ticket into a riding school", highlighting that there were other vocational opportunities available, exemplifying hair and beauty and construction.

VP shared that she believed a further concern was the fact Secondary Schools may need to accept pupil admissions from this resource, due to the curriculum differences, which could be problematic.

Members were advised that Washington Primary Headteachers had also discussed the potential that this provision could be "favoured" by pupils.

KR advised SSF members that the Secondary Headteacher Forum had also discussed potential safeguarding risks in terms of the provision: KR provided assurance that risks had been considered in detail.

KR stated that in relation to the curriculum concerns on transition, re-admission to mainstream schools were considered

through the In Year Fair Access process already and the Link School and AP provisions currently used did not replicate mainstream school curriculums. KR shared that this was one of the reasons why the transition pathway needed to be right.

KR stated that if the proposals presented were not agreed collectively TfC would be in a position where pupils would need to be returned immediately to another mainstream school.

KR acknowledged that the proposals put forward were not a long term solution and a solution was needed going forward.

DW highlighted that pupils within AP provisions in February 2024, because they were permanently excluded, had not returned to mainstream education as the Link School was felt to be the most appropriate placement.

DW stated that she believed schools had managed pupils perspectives about other alternative provision placements historically.

AB advised that the proposals were discussed within the North Primary Headteacher (NPH) Forum and 3 schools had provided positive feedback in terms of the provision provided at EBRC. AB shared that although there were some concerns about the cost of alternative provisions NPH agreed to accept the proposal. AB commended the work undertaken to secure this alternative provision ahead of other LA colleagues.

PS stated that from a financial perspective TfC were in a situation where educational opportunities needed to be available to pupils, and the proposals presented were cost effective. PS stated that he also felt identifying provisions which allowed children to enjoy attendance was important.

MH withdrew from the meeting.

PS noted that the proposals being presented were not long term, or a permanent solution, and stated that he felt if this was a provision which children would engage in it was beneficial.

JW invited members, by a show of hands, to vote on the proposals put forward.

Following a vote Members RESOLVED:

- To agree to the commissioning of a minimum of 20 places, at EBRC, for the academic year 2024/2025.
- To agree the proposal to offer access to an additional 15 places, at EBRC, to Sunderland schools via VPP (to support intervention and prevention strategies).

- Dedicated Schools Grant Update and Projected Outturn

Members confirmed they had received a copy of the following report prior to the meeting for consideration:

➤ Dedicated Schools Grant Update and Projected Outturn 2024/25 (19th September 2024)

DO apologised for the late circulation of the report and provided an overview of the reason the report was delayed.

DO reported that the 2024/25 overall DSG projection was an overspend of £6m, compared to an overspend of £3.5m reported in 2023/24.

Members were advised that the projected deficit within the HNB was estimated to be £7m and this was partially mitigated by underspends in the other blocks of the DSG.

DO stated that in overall terms the 2024/25 DSG budget had increased by 5% but areas of expenditure had increased by 8%. The cumulative DSG Reserve position was expected to be a £15m deficit by the end of the financial year.

DO advised members that the pressures within the HNB were detailed within Section 3 of the report where a continuation of increased numbers and inflationary uplifts are being experienced along with the increase in complexity of need in respect of ASD and SEMH.

DO stated that the report also highlighted some of the mitigating measures being undertaken in relation to DBV. (Pam Robertson's presentation earlier on the Agenda provided further detail on the work currently being undertaken on SEND DBV).

DO reported that indications were that the current budgetary position was highly likely to worsen going forward but an update would be presented in January and March 2025.

DO invited questions or comments on the report presented.

PS acknowledged the report detailed the deficit and overspends but questioned what would happen as the deficit position increased, for example could this continue. DO advised that this decision was in the hands of Central Government, sharing that she was aware other local authorities were in a worse financial position. DO stated that there was currently a statutory override in place in relation to DSG deficit positions, but she was uncertain how long these would be in place.

PS clarified that the deficits were supported by the LA Reserves, DO confirmed this statement was correct, but stated that the DSG Reserve balance was negative.

Members RESOLVED:

- To note the contents of the report presented.
- To note updates on the 2024/25 projected outturn position would be reported in January 2025 and March 2025.

24/51	<u>Any Other Business</u> Members NOTED: - There were no further items of business to be considered.	
24/52	<u>Date and Time of Next Meeting</u> Thursday 17 th October 2024 8.30 am Venue: Meeting to be held virtually	

Subject To Approval

Schools Forum Action Log

Date of Meeting	Agenda No	Request	Action	Responsible	Date of Completion	Remarks
20-Oct-23	23/63	Reports for Discussion and Decision	Updated reports to be presented to the SF meetings in January and March 2024 detailing the DSG Projected Outturn positions.	SR	Jan-24 and Mar-24	Ongoing
04-Jul-24	24/37	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	Consilium Evolve findings following their project to ascertain whether there were any links to attendance and suspensions with sound and hearing abilities to be shared with Forum members	KR	Oct-24	
04/07/2024	24/39	Reports for Discussion and Decision	SM to extend an invitation to Mr P S Wilson, Section 151 Officer, or his representative, to attend a future SF meeting.	SM		
04/07/2024	24/39	Reports for Discussion and Decision	School Funding Reform report to be tabled, when information becomes available.	DO		
04/07/2024	24/39	Reports for Discussion and Decision	SF members to consider the proposal to implement an Attendance/EHE Working Party in September 2024.	SM		
19/09/2024	24/47	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	DW to raise option for secondary schools to submit expressions of interest to open an SEMH ARP provision.	DW	Oct-24	
19/09/2024	24/47	Feedback from Short Life Working Groups	AR's presentation: Pupil Place Planning Projections 2024/2029 to be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.	KR	Oct-24	In E File to circulate
19/09/2024	24/49	Reports for Discussion and Decision	KR and CJ to schedule a meeting to discuss transition proposals in relation to the FOL.	KR/CJ		

standing item

1

2

3

Citywide Primary	R	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
2021	86%	84%	83%	85%	93%	92%	89%	87%
2022	85%	86%	84%	83%	85%	93%	92%	87%
2023	81%	84%	88%	88%	88%	86%	88%	86%
2024	79%	82%	87%	90%	90%	90%	87%	86%

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Citywide Secondary	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Total
2021	88%	93%	90%	85%	82%	88%
2022	89%	88%	92%	89%	84%	89%
2023	93%	90%	88%	93%	88%	90%
2024	89%	95%	93%	91%	88%	91%

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Increase in City Population

2023 GP registration data demonstrated a greater than average year on year increase of new school age pupils in the city. 876 additional school aged pupils with a Sunderland postcode registered with a GP in 2023/24.

- 511 were aged 5 to 11 and
- 365 were aged 12 to 16.
- This was an increase on the 471 additional children aged 5 – 16 who registered with a GP in 2022. Of those
 - 503 were aged 5 – 11 and
 - 219 were aged 12 to 16.

putting the child first

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Increase in City Population (cont.)

2023 GP REG*	Age 0	Age 1	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8	Age 9	Age 10	Age 11
	2775	2816	2770	2843	3019	3184	3186	3189	3131	3209	3508	3421
vs 2022		105%	104%	104%	103%	104%	103%	104%	102%	102%	102%	102%
Increase/Fall vs 2022		140	118	116	98	122	81	115	75	73	62	55

* Increase/Fall reflects the change in number for same groups of children i.e. Age 1 cohort was 2,676 in 2022

putting the child first

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Increase In City Population (Cont.)

2023 GP REG	Age 12	Age 13	Age 14	Age 15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18
	3316	3308	3477	3311	3256	3159	3060
vs 2022	101%	102%	101%	101%	102%	102%	100%
Actual vs 2022	38	54	51	22	54	75	-8

putting the child first

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Projections 2023 -

School place projections are calculated using a range of data sets including

- GP Registration data
- School Census Data
- Housing release and planning data
- School Place Preference data and
- Historical Transition Data

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Citywide Projections (Primary)

- Numbers on roll projected to decline in future years with 1,261 fewer children in the primary sector by 2028/29
- 2028/29 Reception cohort projected to be 143 pupils lower than 2024/25
- In Year Growth is not projected to offset fall in birthrates

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Primary Projections Planning Area 1

Academic year	Primary Citywide Total							Total
	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2025/24	2822	2940	3079	3067	3057	2991	3062	21018
2024/25	2748	2859	3048	3147	3143	3140	3048	21133
2025/26	2786	2791	2902	3086	3185	3181	3178	21109
2026/27	2765	2827	2832	2941	3125	3224	3220	20994
2027/28	2495	2793	2855	2858	2967	3151	3250	20369
2028/29	2605	2521	2819	2879	2882	2991	3175	19872

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Primary Projections (Cont.)

- Greatest projected fall in primary roll is in Washington with the total school population anticipated to be 13% lower in 2028/29 than in 2024/25
- Smallest projected fall in roll is the Coalfields with decline projected to be 2%
- Decline in South Sunderland is projected to be 4% with fall in overall roll in North Sunderland projected to be 9%

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Citywide Projections (Secondary)

- Secondary roll is projected to increase by 5% between 2024/25 and 2027/28 before falling by 1% in 2029/30
- Current projections indicate there will be 733 more children accessing a secondary school place at a Sunderland based school in 2029/30 than in 2023/24
- Increased rolls are a consequence of previously larger year groups transitioning from the primary sector to secondary

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Secondary Projections (Cont.)

Academic year	Secondary							Total (7 - 11) *
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
2023/24	3194	3112	3016	2940	3094	584	508	15356
2024/25	2991	3172	3099	3032	2934	636	511	15228
2025/26	3058	3012	3193	3120	3053	628	537	15496
2026/27	3188	3080	3034	3215	3142	628	551	15658
2027/28	3216	3209	3101	3055	3236	698	551	15816
2028/29	3241	3234	3227	3119	3073	594	555	15899
2029/30	3166	3257	3250	3249	3135	675	520	16050
2030/31	2998	3178	3269	3262	3255	675	520	15961

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Secondary Projections (Cont.)

- Only one area has a projected fall in secondary roll. In Washington the total secondary school population anticipated to be 2% lower in 2029/30 than in 2024/25.
- Washington's primary schools received increased reception cohorts in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Those large, bulge groups are now in the later Secondary year groups with year groups that have followed lower in number

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Secondary Projections (Cont.)

- The only area that currently has a projected deficit in school places in the projection period is Coalfields. Deficit in places is projected from 2026/27 to the end of the projection period
- North Sunderland and South Sunderland are currently projected to have sufficient secondary places across the planning area to meet potential demand



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The Great Unknowns

- Projections are based on current GP data and historical average data. Should trend factors change (for example increased requirement from school places from families seeking asylum or resettlement) this will impact on the accuracy of data
- Projections include an allocation of pupils for housing developments that currently have full planning permission. Should more developments come forward place requirements will increase. Equally should developments with full permissions fail to be delivered place projections will decrease.
- Projections incorporate the allocation of a school place within calculation factors. The increased supply of surplus places may lead to variations in travel patterns which would negatively impact the accuracy of allocations

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Questions?



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REPORT TO SUNDERLAND SCHOOLS FORUM

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

17 October 2024

Commissioning High Needs Places for 2025/2026 in Specialist and Alternative Provisions

1. Purpose of the Report

Schools' Forum members to consider the proposed commissioned places in specialist, special schools, post 16 providers, independent non-maintained special schools and alternative provisions for the academic year 2025/2026.

2. High Needs Place Funding 2025/2026

A series of meetings have been held with colleagues from the SEND Team to identify the number of children/young people who are due to transfer into new settings at the beginning of the academic year 2025/26. An analysis of parental preference and TFC recommendations has been carried out to inform future commissioned place discussions for 2025/26.

All specialist provisions have been contacted to discuss commissioned places for the academic year 2025/2026 based on the actual take-up of places in September 2024 and future projections where available.

As of September 2024, there is a total of 1,077 on roll in our special Schools, this includes children placed via some additional capacity which was agreed by Schools' Forum in June 24, which enabled us to increase capacity across several Special Schools beyond the numbers previously commissioned in November 23. This included an additional 20 places at Columbia Grange, with capital works undertaken over the summer period. There are a further 213 children placed in Specialist ARPs, though this number will rise through the year as the new provisions at Hudson Road and Mill Hill steadily reach capacity. The number of Education, Health and Care plans being issued continues to increase each year. Current data from the Delivering Better Value Diagnostic work indicates a yearly percentage increase of between around 12% based on the last 3 years' data. Our special schools are full, with most operating in-year waiting lists.

Two new Additional Resource Provisions opened in September 2024. A SEMH Provision, based at Hudson Road Primary School offering 16 places and an ASD Provision at Mill Hill Primary School, which also creates an additional 16 places. We are currently actively planning for a further ASD Provision at Hetton Lyons Primary School and are in early-stage discussions around creating further capacity in the Coalfields. Sunningdale Special School will be planning to increase its capacity by 19 due to plans to develop a satellite centre, which will house its Early Years offer, meaning numbers can be increased on the main campus. Some relatively minor work will also enable Harry Watts Academy to develop additional space, increasing numbers by 14.

Appendix 1 identifies an increase in the local authority's commissioning arrangements for 2025/2026. The process identifies that commissioned numbers for 2025/26 will increase to 1,717 compared to 1,640 for the academic year 2024/25 submitted to the ESFA in November 2023 (including the additional places agreed June 2024). This amounts to an increase in commissioned places of 77. However, physical capacity to increase places in most of our local special schools is now a challenge. Together for Children are proactively exploring an expansion to our Additional Resource Provisions (see section on growth).

Pressures

- Numbers at Portland have been increased to 209. The school can accommodate the increased capacity but is now at its physical capacity in terms of space.
- Harry Watt is now operating from 2 sites with 175 pupils on roll from 1st September 2024. There is some capacity to increase with minor works to 190, this is factored into proposed numbers.
- Despite a significant increase to Columbia Grange numbers there remains a waiting list in place for this school and given the rise in complex ASD presentations, this is unlikely to change.
- The sharp rise in permanent exclusions experienced across the City means pressures on places for Alternative Provision and in particular 6-day provision remain acute as described the September paper to Schools' Forum. This is partly mitigated by the commissioning of places at EBRC.

Growth

- In response to the need to continue to develop the city's early intervention offer TfC have increased commissioned places at the Primary Intervention Programme provided by the Foundation of Light from 5 to 10. This provision focusses on short term, high impact intervention strategies aimed at Key Stage 2 children presenting with Range 2 SEMH behaviours.
- We are consulting on a proposal to create a further Additional Resource Base for ASD at Hetton Lyons
- Due to the pressures on places for 6-day provision across the City we have commissioned 20 places at EBRC, a paper was shared with Schools' Forum in September on this development. An additional 15 places have also been commissioned at EBRC to allocate via VPP for schools to seek short term intervention support.
- Sunningdale's planned opening of a site at Ryhope Infants will enable numbers to be increased on the School's main site at Doxford Park

Independent Non-maintained Specialist provision

Schools' Forum members are asked to note that in 2023/4 we commissioned 114 places for children accessing independent specialist and / or non-maintained schools and a further 79 specialist post 16 placements. As of 1st October, we have commissioned 112 places in these provisions for children and a further 50 Specialist Post 16 placements. However, it is likely there will be further places required as a result of tribunal challenge or placement breakdown in specialist settings throughout

the current academic year. The greatest cost pressure in terms of the independent sector remains Ashbrooke, with 55 placements at an average cost of £85,000. The number of placements at Ashbrooke has remained stable despite continued strong pressure from parents and a number of tribunal appeals for this setting.

Out of borough placements

Schools' Forum members are asked to note that in 2023/4 we had 42 children with EHCPs placed in Sunderland Schools. However, we placed 37 children within placements located in other Local Authority areas. Consultation requests from other neighbouring Local Authority areas are an ongoing concern, particularly for Columbia Grange, Harry Watt and Sunningdale and we are discussing ways to deal with these in a more proportionate manner with Durham SEND Team.

Post 16 places

The numbers of young people accessing Specialist Post 16 placements has reduced by 29 from 2023/4. This fall is largely due to a decline in the number of children being placed at ESPA and to a lesser degree Hedley's College. We also ask Forum to note we plan to increase commissioned places with Sunderland College from 150 to 180 in 2025/6. Despite some increase in Sunderland placements, the majority of this increase is due to increased demand from other Local Authority areas, therefore ultimately cost neutral for Sunderland as funding is recouped via the ESFA import / export arrangements. However, as the Education Partnership North East is based in Sunderland it is our responsibility to commission numbers for all colleges within the group to the ESFA.

Recommendations

School Forum members are asked to:

- (i) Consider and comment on the information provided in the report.
- (ii) Agree to the proposed commissioned numbers for 2025/2026 in order for a submission to be made to the ESFA by November 2024
- (iii) receive an updated report in the meeting to be held in December 2024 should any changes have been made to the numbers presented in the report.

If you have any queries in relation to the above report, please contact Kimberley Richardson, Strategic Lead – Education (Alternative Provision), or Pamela Robertson, Strategic Lead – SEND (Special Schools and Additional Resourced Provisions), in the first instance.

Appendix A

Special Units and Resourced Provisions								
Organisation / Provider	Type	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/6	2025/6
		Agreed Places	Actual Places	Agreed Places	Proposed Places	Actual Places	Proposed Places	Change
Academy 360	Academy	35	35	35	35	35	35	0
Biddick Academy	Academy	35	36	35	35	33	35	0
Farringdon Academy	Academy	35	32	35	35	35	35	0
Hetton School	Academy	10	7	10	10	5	10	0
Oxclose Primary Academy	Academy	7	7	7	7	6	7	0
Oxclose Secondary Academy	Academy	12	12	12	13	14	13	0
Thorney Close HI	Maintained	14	15	14	14	14	12	-2
Hudson Road (SEMH) NEW	Maintained	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	8	16	0
Usworth Colliery	Maintained	14	15	15	26	26	26	0
Hetton Lyons NEW	Academy					N/A	*16	+16
Washington CAP	Academy	27	27	27	27	27	27	0
JFK – Treehouse Provision	Academy	24	24	24	24	24	24	0
Mill Hill primary School ARP NEW	Maintained	-	-	-	16	10	16	0
Total Special Units and Resourced Provisions		213	210	214	258	237	272	+14

* Subject to necessary approvals and delivery of the project

Special Schools Including Post 16 Places								
Organisation / Provider	Type	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/6	2025/6
		Agreed Places	Actual Places	Agreed Places	Proposed Places	Actual Places	Proposed places	Change
Barbara Priestman Academy*	Academy	178	175	178	192	198	192	0
Columbia Grange	Academy	115 (+5)	120	115	140	140	140	0
North View Academy	Academy	85	85	85	85	83	85	0
Portland Academy	Academy	190	190	198	204	209	204	0
Trinity New Bridge Academy*	Academy	140	134	134	134	134	134	0
Sunningdale School	Maintained	130	121	136	141	138	160	19
Harry Watt (Opens September 2020)	Academy	138	140	164	176	175	190	14
Total Special Schools* Including Post 16 Places		976	965	1,010	1067	1077	1,105	33

Alternative Provision in Schools and Academies								
Organisation/ Provider	Type	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/6	2025/6
		Agreed Places	Actual Places	Agreed Places	Proposed Places	Actual Places	Proposed Places	Changes
Valley Road Primary – Language Unit Provision	Academy	7	7	10	10	8	10	0
Northern Saints Primary – Language Unit Provision	Maintained	10	10	10	10	7	10	0
New Penshaw Comm Hub (offers 12 week blocks 3 x per year)	Academy	10 (per block)	7	10 (per block)	10	3	10*	0
Total Alternative Provision in Schools and Academies		27	24	27	30	18	30	0

Alternative Provisions								
Organisation/ Provider	Type	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2025/6	2025/26
		Agreed Places	Actual Places	Agreed Places	Proposed Places	Actual Places	Proposed Places	Changes
KS1/2/3/4 Pupil Referral Service	AP	189 (196 Sept 22)	189	196	196	196	196	0
Consilium Evolve	AP	32 (+16 from Sept 22)	32	48	48	48	48	0
Beacon of Light	AP	9	9	10	10	10	6	-4
Foundation of Light	AP	0	0	5	5	10	10	+5
Hopesprings Sea View Road	IS	12	12	12	12	12	12	0
Hopesprings Millfield	IS	14	14	14	14	14	14	0
Hopesprings Southwick	IS					4	4	+4
EBRC NEW	AP					20	20	+20
Total Alternative Provision - Other		263	256	285	285	314	310	25

TOTAL COMMISSION PLACES		1,479	1,245	1,536	1,640	1646	1717	25
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