

CABINET REPORT– 18 DECEMBER 2018

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY SUFFICIENCY OF PLACES STRATEGY

Report by Director for Children's Services

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note and approve the special educational needs sufficiency of places strategy

Executive Summary

2. An analysis of the sufficiency of places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities demonstrated that there is an urgent need to increase the number of places available within Oxfordshire schools.
3. The special educational needs and disability sufficiency of places strategy has been written as a result of this analysis of need and builds on the county council's vision for special education need and disability. The sufficiency of places strategy is part of a broader special educational needs and disability strategy in preparation.
4. In order to provide sufficient school places the analysis shows that by 2022 further places for approximately 100 more pupils with Education Health and Care Plans in mainstream schools and for an additional 300 special school places will be needed.
5. Paragraph 16 of the report sets out the 4 strands making up the Strategy.

Introduction

6. In 2018 Oxfordshire County Council conducted an analysis of the sufficiency of places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
7. Since 2013 there has been increase in demand of 77% for Education, Health and Care Plans. This has led to an increase in demand for special school places and that there has been an increase in allocation of places to independent non- maintained special schools
8. The increase in the demand for places has placed a pressure on the high needs block. A review was conducted of the high needs block as part of a process that Local Authorities with funding from Central Government carried

out to review the spend. This was conducted by an external consultant, Linda Calverley and was completed August 2018.

9. The review also coincided with the outcome of the Joint Local Area special educational needs and disability Inspection and production of the subsequent Written Statement of Action.
10. The special educational needs and disability sufficiency of places strategy has been written as a result of the analysis of need that clearly shows that there is an urgent need to increase the number of places available within Oxfordshire schools.
11. This builds on our vision for special educational needs and disability which is:
 - a. Investing in and developing good quality local provision which meets the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disability within Oxfordshire – the right pupils, in the right provision at the right place
 - b. Oxfordshire County Council has a whole- hearted commitment to investing in and developing schools' special educational needs and disability provision for the children of Oxfordshire. A 'local first' approach will ensure that children and young people's needs are at the core of our service planning.
 - c. In Oxfordshire we are proud of the special educational needs and disability education provision we currently deliver which enables more children and young people with special educational needs and disability to access local provision. Our future programme and creative approaches are enabling this work to expand and deliver even better outcomes.
12. The sufficiency of places strategy is one part of the broader special educational needs and disability strategy and this full strategy will be brought to Cabinet in spring term of 2019.

Key Issues

Ensure there are sufficient school places through the special educational needs and disability sufficiency of places strategy and reduce demand for independent and non-maintained specialist placements:

13. A special educational needs and disabilities sufficiency of places strategy has been produced (Annex 1). This strategy identifies that Oxfordshire's school age population is growing, both because of the rise in births experienced between 2002-2011 and due to the large-scale housing growth planned for the county between now and 2027. However, the growth in demand for special school and resource base provision has increased rapidly.
14. This is due to an increase in Education, Health and Care Plans (77% since 2013) due to changes brought in by Children's and Families Act 2014, which

increased the age range from 2-19 to 0-25 years. There has also been a rise in demand in children being identified as having social and emotional mental health needs, and/or a diagnosis of Autism. In addition, there has been a real term reduction in school funding, impacting on the ability for a mainstream school to effectively educate pupils with special educational needs at an early stage. This has resulted in children and young people requiring places at special schools, resource bases, independent non-maintained special schools, and/or can place them at risk of exclusion or elective home education.

15. Currently, the Council has a lack of special educational needs school places. Analysis has shown that the Council requires by 2022:
 - a. Places for approximately 100 more pupils with Education Health and Care Plans in mainstream schools, to be supported via an enhanced network of resource bases and mainstream programmes
 - b. An additional 300 special school places to reverse the recent dependence on the independent non-maintained special school sector and ensure needs can be met through the local authority's provision.

16. To meet this increase and demand for places the special educational needs and disability sufficiency of places strategy identifies four key strands. The four strands set out the vision for how Oxfordshire County Council will ensure sufficient education provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
 - a. Strand 1: Ensure that all early year's providers and mainstream schools support an inclusive approach to education:

All children, where possible, to be educated in their local school, receiving the support they need at the earliest stage and providers following an inclusive approach for all children with special educational needs and disabilities.
 - b. Strand 2: Review of the current resource base provision across the County:

Conduct a review of all base provision needs and undertake a consultation with schools who currently have a resource base provision onsite to identify any opportunities to increase capacity.
 - c. Strand 3: Review of current special school sites
Whilst many of the special schools across Oxfordshire have already increased the numbers of children they admit the review is to focus on whether further expansion is possible and a survey of all special school sites has been undertaken.
 - d. Strand 4: New Schools
Open two new special schools focused on social, emotional and mental health needs and Autism in Bloxham Grove and Didcot and to rebuild Northfield school
For a detailed explanation please see Annex 1 (pages 16-19)

17. The special educational needs and disabilities team is working on aligning the various aspects in relation to special educational needs and disabilities and will be in the spring term bringing to Cabinet the completed overall strategy for special educational needs and disabilities and will also be reporting in February to Education Scrutiny.
18. The proposal is that the special educational needs and disability Programme Board, in the Spring term, will become the special educational needs and disabilities performance board to oversee and hold to account progress made within special educational needs and disability as a whole. This board will be chaired by the Lead Member for Education and reports will be given to Members, Education Scrutiny and other Governance Bodies.
19. Cabinet is asked to note and approve the special educational needs and disability sufficiency of places strategy.

Financial and Staff Implications

20. This strategy is aimed at increasing and improving special educational needs and disabilities places and provision within the maintained sector (including academies) to ensure the educational needs of all children with special educational needs and disabilities can be met without undue reliance on the independent non-maintained special school sector. In doing so it will also enable more effective and efficient use to be made of the high needs block funding.
21. There was an overspend of £1.2m by the end of 2016/17 in the high needs block which rose to £2.8m in 2017 /18 and is estimated to be more than £6m in 2018/19.
22. Work is underway to determine, utilising a recent survey of special schools, additional county council capital investment to implement this strategy and reduce the need to use the independent non-maintained special school sector.
23. The costs for a placement in an independent non-maintained special school would, as typical examples, be:
 - A day placement at a school for a child with social emotional & mental health needs, costs £53,649 per year (based on a child just going in to the school). The cost of this placement for 5 years (until the end of year 11) would be £268,245. This does not include transport costs on a daily basis, which equates to around £20,000 per year.
 - A day placement for a child attending a school for children diagnosed with Autism will cost around £77,000. The cost of a placement for 5 years would cost £385,000. This does not include transport costs.
24. A local first approach to meet the needs of children and young people will reduce the impact on the transport costs for students who are currently travelling considerable distances to access a school place.

Equalities Implications

25. The Local Authority needs to ensure that it has sufficient school places for all children, including those with special educational needs. It would not be fulfilling its statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school placements are available for all children if this strategy was not in place.

Risk Management

26. By providing the additional places the Council will be able to fulfil the choice and expectations of parents for the best possible education reducing the spend from the High needs block and special education needs transport budgets.
27. The Council will be able to meet its statutory duties of effectively and within the 20-week timescale complete an Education and Health Care Plan for a child.

LUCY BUTLER
Director for Children's Services

Background papers:

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December 2018

Annex 1:



Special Educational Needs Sufficiency of Places Strategy

2018-2027

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Executive Summary

This strategy:

- i. Ensures Oxfordshire has sufficient school places to meet the needs of all children with special educational needs and disabilities; ensuring that the provision is developed in the right place, at the right time, with the additional places to address population growth and the identified increase in demand.
- ii. Provides support across Oxfordshire's mainstream schools to ensure they provide inclusive education, and adopts a 'local first' approach wherever appropriate.
- iii. Ensures the high needs block funding is spent effectively to meet the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities across Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire's school age population is growing, both because of the rise in births experienced between 2002-2011 and due to the large-scale housing growth planned for the county between now and 2027. However, the growth in demand for special school and resource base provision has increased rapidly. This is due to:

- An increase in Education Health and Care Plans (77% since 2014) due to changes brought in by Children's and Families Act 2014, which increased the age range from 2-19 to 0-25 years (resulting in an additional 450 plans).
- A rise in demand in children being identified as having social and emotional mental health needs, and/or a diagnosis of Autism.
- A real term reduction in school funding, impacting on the ability for a mainstream school to effectively educate pupils with special educational needs at an early stage. Resulting in children and young people requiring places at special schools, resource bases, independent non-maintained special schools, and/or can place them at risk of exclusion or elective home education.

Previous growth planning for special schools in Oxfordshire was based predominantly on population growth. However, the rapid increase in the provision of Education Health and Care Plans has over the last few years has meant that even though many of the special schools have increased their capacity (Appendix 4) the need for additional places is continuing to grow and the current number of places is not sufficient to meet the demand. The consequence of this has led to: -

- Special school and resource base provision under strain, with most schools and bases currently at or over capacity because of the increase in special educational needs and disabilities demand.
- Increased use of independent non-maintained special school placements and as of January 2018, 227 pupils were placed at independent non-maintained special schools. This growth has doubled the cost of independent non-maintained special school placements since 2013 and for 2017/18 the total cost of independent non-maintained special school placements to the council was over £14m and this is predicted to rise for 2018/2019 because of insufficient places in the maintained sector.
- High needs block revenue pressures and overspend.

Currently, as a result there are insufficient school places to meet this demand which impacts on the ability for the Council to: -

- Effectively and in the 20-week timescale complete an Education and Health Care Plan for a child and fulfil the statutory requirements.
- Fulfil the choice and expectations of parents for the best possible education provision for their child
- Require increasing number of places into independent non-maintained special schools resulting in the overspend of the high needs block
- Utilise the high needs block resource to support early intervention in mainstream schools



The strategy was conducted to detail how the Council plans to address the current lack of special educational needs school places. Analysis has shown that the Council requires by 2022: -

- Support for approximately 100 more pupils with Education Health and Care Plans in mainstream schools, to be supported via an enhanced network of resource bases and mainstream programmes
- An additional 200 special school places to reverse the recent dependence on the independent non-maintained special schools sector and ensure needs can be met through the local authority's provision.

The paper identifies options to meet the increase in demand on places for children particularly, though not exclusively, with social and emotional mental health needs/Autism to: -

- expand and develop current education provision across mainstream schools
- review resource base and special school sector
- the building of new special school provision

The special educational needs and disabilities sufficiency of places strategy comprises four strands. These four Strands (see page 16) sets out the vision for how Oxfordshire County Council will ensure sufficient education provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities where the demand for places is increasing and the level of funding is decreasing both for the Council and Schools. The impact will be:

- A local first approach to educating children and young people with special educational needs
- Inclusive attitude to engage learners and schools reducing exclusions and in some cases elective home education
- Providing best value in the allocation of the high needs block and revenue spend, for example, for every 10 pupils taught in mainstream school this would lead to a saving of £226k/year

- Provide effective transport arrangements as pupils would be able to, where appropriate, access local provision
- Ensuring that Education Health and Care Plans are issued within 20 weeks and the content of each plan is of high quality with input throughout the process from parents/carers and young people. This will help to minimise the number of complaints and cost of appeals and tribunals.

The Need for this Strategy

Population growth

In Oxfordshire, as well as nationally, total pupil numbers have risen, and will continue to rise over the period covered by this report. The county has seen an increase in the birth population between 2002-2011. This growth has already progressed through the primary age range and is now filtering into the secondary sector.

Children & Families Act 2014

Following the Introduction of the Children's & Families Act in 2014, the age range of children eligible to have an Education, Health and Care plan increased from 2-19 (16 years if in a mainstream school) years to 0-25 years. The number of Education, Health and Care plans maintained by Oxfordshire since 2014 has increased significantly (77%). With the predicted population growth, it is expected that the total number of Education, Health and Care plans will continue to increase over the next five to ten years as shown on page 6, (Figure 1), around 13% per year. The number of children with an Education, Health & Care plan will have nearly doubled in five years.

The figures for the first ten months of 2018 show an increase from **13%** to **37%**. If the total growth of Education, Health and Care plans continue to accelerate rather than grow at the projected rate, the number of children with Education, Health and care plans will be higher than those predicted in Figure 1 in 2023 and the number of specialist placements required will exceed the current number planned.

The growth rate will need to be monitored carefully and this strategy will need to be refreshed annually to ensure that the demand for places is monitored closely.

Increased incidence of specific needs

The numbers of Education, Health and Care plans appear to be growing with a higher number of children being diagnosed with social, emotional and mental health needs and Autism (Figure 2 & 3). This rising demand and particularly the increasing complexity of needs is creating a lack of placements across the Local Authority.

Over the last five years, the number of Education, Health and Care plans with Autism Spectrum Disorders identified as the primary need has nearly doubled. Those children identified as having social and emotional mental health needs and specific learning difficulty as their primary need have also grown significantly faster than others, although specific learning difficulty remains a small percentage of the total of Education, Health and Care plans maintained by the Local Authority.

Children with social and emotional mental health needs and Autism now account for nearly half of Education, Health and Care plans maintained by Oxfordshire.

Figure 1: Projected number of Education, Health and Care plans for Oxfordshire by 2023

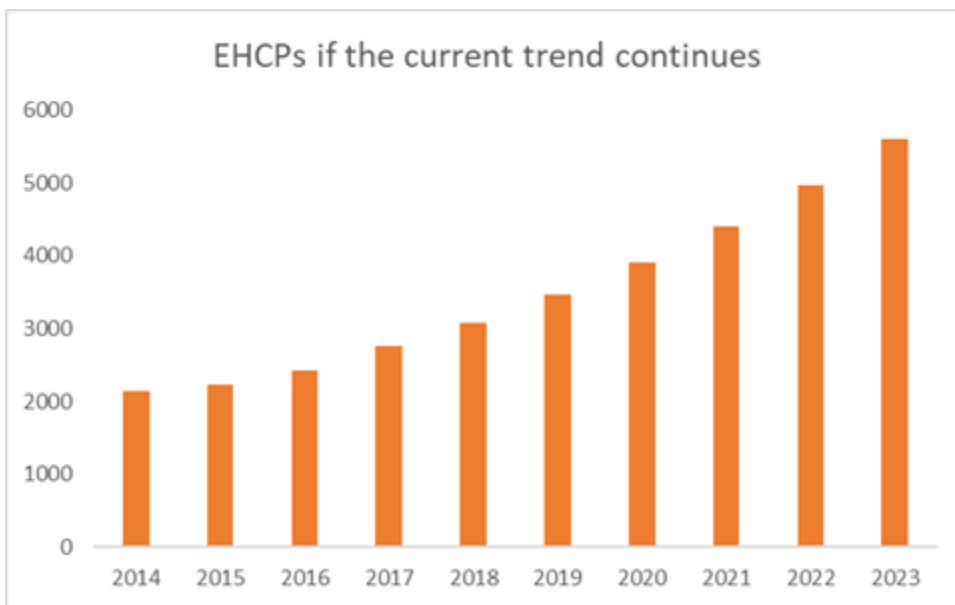


Figure 2: Increase in Education, Health and Care plans (all ages) listing each primary need in Oxfordshire 2014-2018

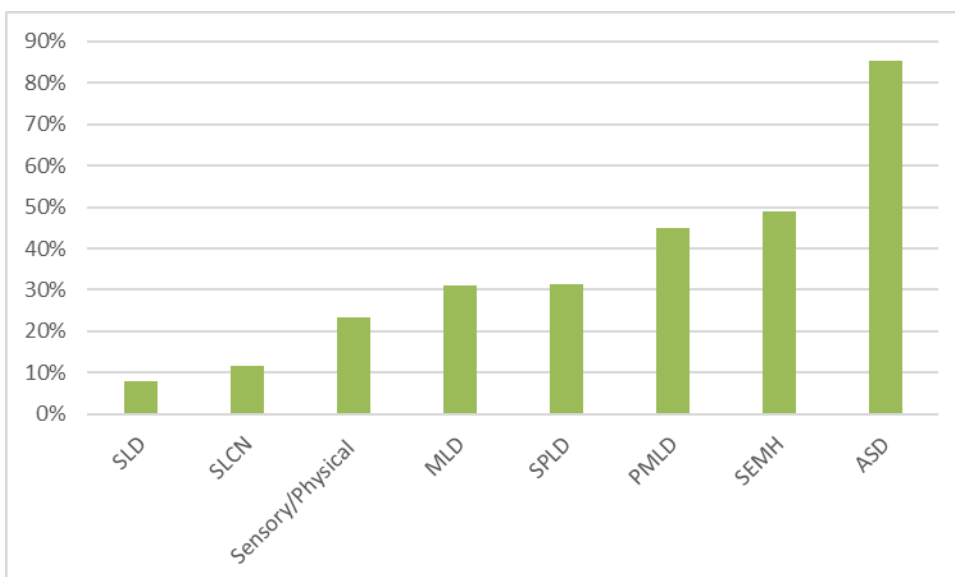
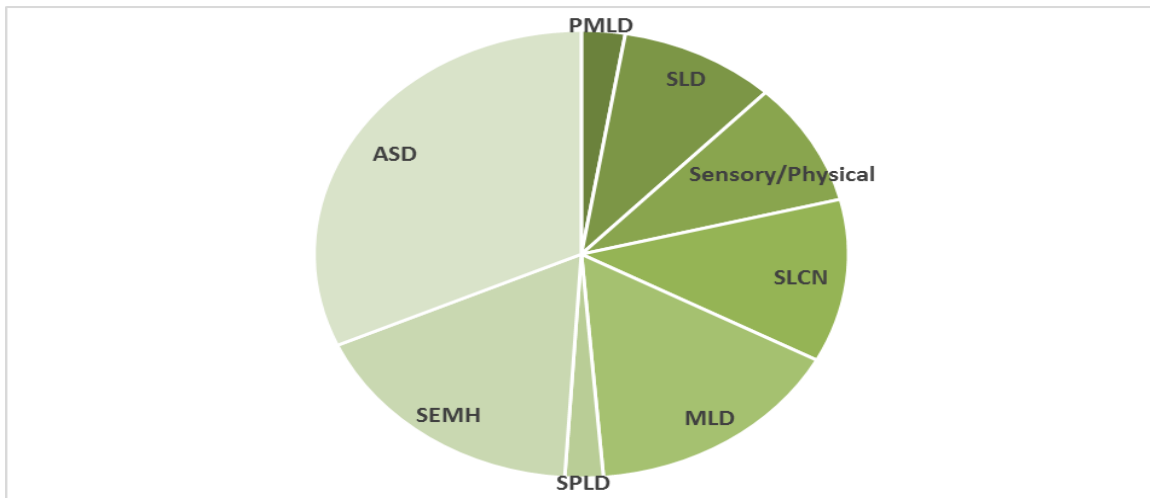


Figure 3: Oxfordshire Education, Health and Care plans (all ages) by Primary Need 2018



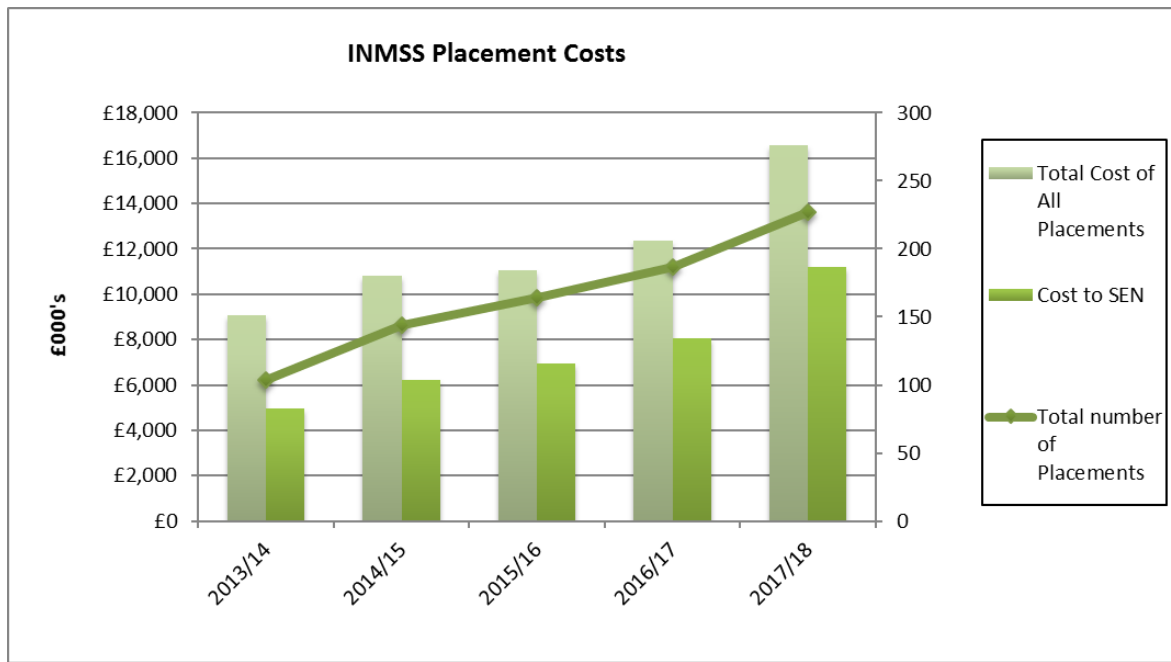
Due to the increase of children with a primary need of Autism/social and emotional mental health needs, additional provision will need to be developed across the mainstream & special school sector to ensure the Local Authority is able to provide support across the mainstream and special school sector.

Increased use of high-cost independent non-maintained provision resulting in an overspend on the high needs block.

Despite a significant increase in Oxfordshire's maintained special school places in recent years, the numbers of requests for specialist provision have risen more quickly and supply is not meeting demand. This has resulted in a year-on-year increase in the numbers of children funded from the high needs block in the Independent sector.

By January 2018, 227 pupils were placed in the independent sector. This growth has doubled the cost of independent non-maintained special school placements since 2013: in 2017/18 the total cost of independent non-maintained special school placements to the council was over £14m, this is continuing to grow as demand increases.

Figure 4: Independent non-maintained special school placements and costs (all ages) 2013/14 – 2017/18

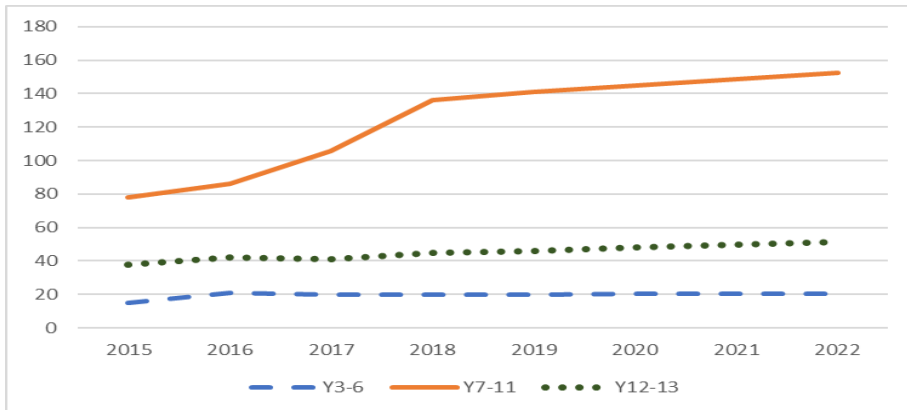


Most of this growth has been for children with Autism and social and emotional mental health needs, by 2018 placements with this area of need accounted for 73% of all independent non- maintained special schools school placements. This demand is exacerbated by the shortage of maintained special school places.

If independent non- maintained special school placements (all needs) grow only in line with the forecast population growth for each age group, there would be a minimal increase in the primary age group, but the secondary age group would grow by 17 places and the sixth form age range by another 6 places by 2022.

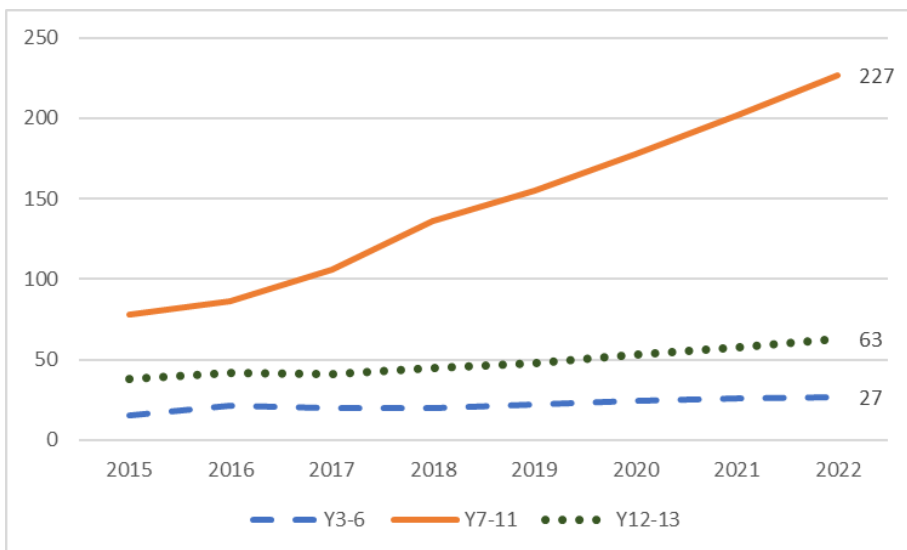
At an average cost of approximately £50,000 per place, if Independent Non-Maintained Special School placements only grow in line with population an extra 24 places at least would be required for the Year 3-13 age range and would represent an additional burden to the high needs block of approximately £1.2m.

Figure 5: Projected Oxfordshire Independent Non-Maintained Special School placements in line with population



However, if the trend since 2015 is projected forward, the additional number of places for the secondary age range would increase to 116. The additional pressure on the high needs block funding would be at least £5.8m.

Figure 6: Projected Oxfordshire independent non-maintained special school placements in line with recent trends



How well does Oxfordshire's current provision meet the current and future needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities?

Maps 1 and 2 (Appendix 1) illustrate significant weaknesses in the current distribution of special schools and resource bases across the Local Authority:

- There is a lack of primary resource bases in most areas outside Oxford city.
- There is a shortage of resource bases focused on social and emotional mental health needs.
- There is a lack of special school provision for social and emotional mental health needs and Autism outside of Oxford city.

As a result, many pupils face long journeys to school, especially for Autism and social and emotional mental health needs placements. While the profound and multiple learning disabilities/severe learning disability focused community special schools draw many of their pupils from the surrounding locality, only a third of pupils attending the county's social and emotional mental health needs special schools in Oxford live in Oxford.

The shortage of social and emotional mental health needs and Autism places mean that many pupils with these needs attend community special schools. In many cases their needs would be better met by more specialist schools, and if such schools were available, it would free up space at community special schools.

Many families do not consider the county's provision for social and emotional mental health needs and Autism adequately meets their children's needs, which leads to increased demand for higher cost places at independent non-maintained schools.

In 2017, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission jointly inspected the effectiveness of Oxfordshire's approach to implementing the special educational needs and disabilities reforms set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. This inspection identified several key shortcomings that need to be addressed by a Written Statement of Action monitored by the Department for Education and Care Quality Commission on a quarterly basis.

Predicted number of additional special school and resource base places required.

It is predicted that the number of additional places required by 2022 will be:

- Support for approximately 100 more pupils with Education, Health and Care plans in mainstream schools, to be supported via an enhanced network of resource bases;

- An additional 200 special school places to reverse the dependence on the independent non- maintained special schools sector and ensure children's needs can be met in county through the local authority's provision.

The additional capacity will need to have a particular focus on social, emotional and mental health needs and Autism, which are the fastest growing needs in Oxfordshire and together now account for nearly half of all children in Oxfordshire with Education, Health and Care plans.

- The strategy primarily focuses on the five-year period 2018-2022, but also looks beyond to the following five-year period to 2027. Whilst also recognising that housing and population growth, and trends in special educational needs and disabilities provision, are less certain over the longer timeframe. The strategy will be reviewed and refreshed annually and where the trend differs from that which has been previously identified, the strategy will be revised accordingly.

This strategy sits alongside Oxfordshire County Council's special educational needs and disabilities high needs block funding Review 2018 which includes recommendations on funding models across the maintained and special school sector.

The Special Educational Needs & Disabilities education sufficiency strategy comprises four strands, which sets out the vision for how Oxfordshire County Council will ensure sufficient education provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Strand 1: Ensure that all early year's providers and mainstream schools support an inclusive approach to education.

All children should be educated in their local school, receiving the support they need at the earliest stage. All providers should follow an Inclusive Approach to all children with special educational needs and disabilities. To ensure that support is available for all children the following will be addressed:

- Early Intervention strategies will be put into place to support schools to ensure that they are able to request support from professionals at the earliest opportunity.
- Following the review of the high needs block funding, measures will be put into place to ensure that any funding allocated to a child will follow the child, ensuring that the funding will always be available at the school or setting that the child attends to meet their needs.
- Review of the special educational needs support service to ensure that specialist teachers can support schools and settings to meet all children's needs at the earliest opportunity before the school/setting feels the need to apply for an Education, Health and Care plan. It is hoped that this approach will prevent the escalation of needs for some children which in turn can then lead to more expensive provision/school setting being required.
- There is a wealth of specialist expertise in schools/settings across Oxfordshire. Much of this support is used in its own sector and not spread

across to support other schools to meet children's needs. The Local Authority needs to be able to utilise this support to upskill staff in all schools to ensure that the inclusive environment that many schools offer is available to all, with staff having the expertise to deal with children with more complex needs.

- Offer outreach/inreach support across the early years/mainstream sector. Using the expertise that is available in our alternative provision and special school sectors.
- School to school peer support to upskill staff who do not feel confident that they are able to meet all children's needs.

It is hoped that this approach could help to reduce the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions across the County. However, this will not prevent all children being excluded so we need to ensure that any alternative provision provided supports children's educational needs, therefore we will need to undertake a:

- Ensure the alternative provision available across Oxfordshire will meet the needs of children in the primary and secondary sector have their needs met if they are permanently excluded without any delays (by the 6th day).
- Ensure that a robust commissioning approach is in place across Children's Services to ensure that any provision required to be commissioned is appropriate, cost effective and contracted appropriately.

Strand 2: Review of the current resource base provision across the County (Appendix 1 – List of current resource bases)

Currently many of the resource bases are run by staff employed by Oxfordshire County Council. The school does not have any of the employment costs or hold the responsibility to replace staff when they leave. This seems to be a situation that is unique to Oxfordshire as in many other Local Authorities, provision attached to a school site is often run by the school. The focus is to: -

- Conduct a review of all base provision needs.
- Undertake a consultation with schools who currently have a resource base provision onsite to identify any opportunities to increase capacity.
- Establish a clear funding mechanism (part of the high needs block funding review) to ensure that schools have the funds to cover the costs for staff and to support the pupils attending the resource base provision.
- Open at least 7 resource bases within new mainstream schools by 2022. It is hoped, where possible, that we can utilise empty space on an existing school site. Where possible expansion of resource bases will be tied in with expansion plans for current schools.
- New resource bases currently confirmed to open over the next 3 years are:
 - Aureus Primary School, Didcot, January 2019 – 8 places, Social and Emotional Mental Health needs (in addition to Didcot DEN which opened 2017)
 - Aureus Secondary School, Didcot, January 2019 – growing to 20 places, Social and Emotional Mental Health needs

- Banbury (starting at Longford Park, moving to new Southam Road Primary School), October 2018 – 10 places, Communication and Interaction/ Social and Emotional Mental Health needs
- Gagle Brook Primary School, Bicester, September 2019 – 6 places, Communication and Interaction
- SW Bicester secondary school, 2020 – 8 places, Social and Emotional Mental Health needs
- Barton Primary School, Oxford, 2020 – 8 places, Social and Emotional Mental Health needs
- New west Witney primary school, 2020 – 8 places, Communication and Interaction

This is a total of 68 additional places, which will significantly improve the geographic and primary need coverage of bases, as can be seen in **Appendix 3**.

In addition, Oxfordshire have completed many capital projects since 2011. Further projects across the County have been planned, some of which are already underway. Each proposal is explained in more detail in **Appendix 4**.

Strand 3: Current special schools (Appendix 2 – List of all current special schools)

Many of the special schools across Oxfordshire have already increased the numbers of children they admit to the school due to the increases in demand for places over the last few years. To determine whether further expansion is possible, a review of all special school sites has been undertaken to see:

- If further expansion is possible, either to reconfigure the current building to accommodate more students or whether there is room on the site to build additional accommodation.
- To review the internal accommodation, and provide investment to schools where refurbishment is required. Many of our special schools have not had any capital investment for several years and therefore may need some investment to upgrade them in some areas.
- Northfield school in particular is a school that requires significant investment, with the recommendation to re-build and expand the current school. Without this school, more children will need to be educated out of county which will further increase the pressure on the high needs block funding.
- Continue the current programme of special school expansions, with planned expansions by 2022 at:
 - Fitzwaryn School (Wantage)
 - Bardwell School (Bicester)
 - John Watson School (Wheatley).
- Confirm the potential to relocate and expand accommodation used by the secondary phase of Bishopswood School (Sonning Common).
- Provide new, expanded, accommodation to replace that currently used by Northfield School.
- Review additional capacity needs resulting from planned housing growth in each district, once the respective Local Plans are adopted and agreed.

- A review of all special school provision has been undertaken (Appendix 6) to identify any opportunities for expansion. Each school site will now be looked at closely and any development opportunities investigated further with schools.

Strand 4: New Schools

The following projects have already been highlighted:

- Open two new special schools focused on social, emotional and mental health needs and Autism:
 - Bloxham Grove in north Oxfordshire (due to open 2020);
 - A new school in Valley Park, Didcot in south Oxfordshire (target date 2023). Application has been submitted to the Department of Education to gain funding towards this project as part of the special free school application process.
- All projects will include resource base provision within the specification for new mainstream schools, except where the local need is already met.



Financial Summary

This strategy is aimed at increasing and improving Special Educational Needs & Disabilities provision within the maintained sector (including academies) to ensure the educational needs of all children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities can be met without undue reliance on the Independent Non-Maintained Special School sector. In doing so it will also enable more effective and efficient use to be made of the high needs block funding.

There was an overspend of £1.2m by the end of 2016/17 in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High needs block which rose to £2.8m in 2017 /18 and is estimated to be more than £6m in 2018/19.

The DSG funding blocks were ring fenced from April 2018 and the Council becomes liable for any overspend. In comparison to other Local Authorities Oxfordshire is poorly funded and an example of this is that Buckinghamshire, a very similar Council in terms of size and number of pupils, has a High needs block allocation that is £17 million more than Oxfordshire.

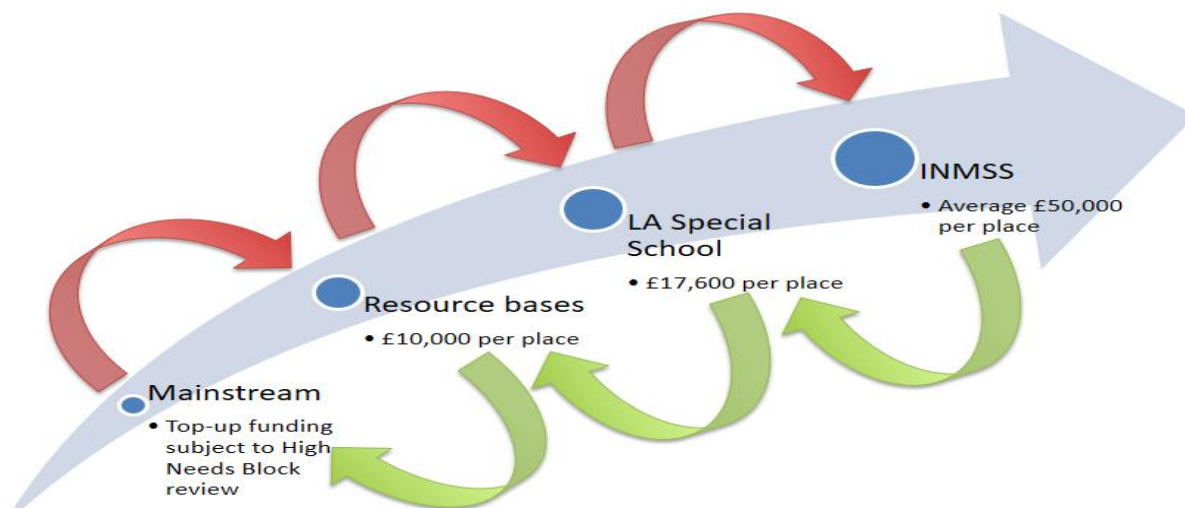
Without the investment proposed in this strategy, there will continue to be a growing overspend on the High Needs budget due to the reliance on high-cost Independent providers. It is only through the additional capacity proposed in this strategy that the decisive change necessary can be made in High Needs spending.

Additional county council capital investment proposed by this strategy (in addition to existing capital programme, and subject to confirmation over Section 106 funding) £15m

Expected annual revenue savings because of this strategy (after 6 years, once proposed new schools are at full capacity) £7m

Most importantly, these savings will be made while at the same time improving the education provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Oxfordshire, reducing the reliance on out of county provision and reducing travel distances to access suitable provision.

Figure 7: Cost implications of special educational needs and disabilities market segments



Example

If the Local Authority decided not to increase the special school provision provided across the county, more children would need to be placed in the independent non-maintained sector:

Examples of costs are:

- A day placement at a school for a child with social emotional and mental Health needs, costs £53,649 per year (based on a child just going in to the school). The cost of this placement for 5 years (until the end of year 11) would be £268,245. This does not include transport costs on a daily basis, which equates to around £20,000 per year.
- A day placement for a child attending a school for children with Autism will cost around £77,000. The cost of a placement for 5 years would cost £385,000. This does not include transport costs.

The high needs block funding is already under extreme pressure and is currently showing an overspend. If the trend continues as is with the increased demand on the Independent sector, with costs for placements demonstrated above, this would further impact on the high needs block budget and put further pressure on the transport budget.

Revenue savings resulting from this strategy

Although this strategy recommends a very significant capital investment by the council, such investment will unlock a greater scale of future revenue savings.

Recent years have seen a trend towards greater use of higher cost special educational needs and disabilities education providers; this strategy facilitates the reversal of that trend by ensuring there are sufficient resource base and Local Authority special school places to meet Oxfordshire's needs.

As well as improving access to learning for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, this will deliver better value for money and in time end the current overspend on the high needs block.

Although the expanding resource bases and special schools are an important part of enabling revenue savings to be made, the largest element relates to the additional provision proposed for social and emotional mental health needs and Autism.

The two new special schools and the replacement and expansion of accommodation currently used by Northfield School will provide 224 additional places specifically for children and young people with social and emotional mental health needs and Autism. The current shortage of suitable maintained special school places for these needs has led to a rapid growth in the use of independent schools, where places are on average around £30,000 per pupil per year more expensive than Local Authority special schools, and in many cases much higher than that. The 224 places created by this strategy therefore offer the potential to reduce spending by around £7m per year.

The full scale of this saving will, of course, only be realised if there are sufficient pupils who would otherwise have required Independent placements who are instead able to access Local Authority provision as a result of the additional capacity.

It must be recognised that these savings will not happen overnight. As well as the delay before the new schools can be built and opened, once they are, it is unlikely that significant numbers of pupils already at the Independent providers will transfer. A more conservative assumption is that the savings will grow annually as new placements can be made to the new schools rather than to expensive out of county providers.

In the last four years, an average of 35 new independent non-maintained special school placements have been made for Autism and social and emotional mental health needs per year, but this has been accelerating; by June 2018 there had been 44 new independent non-maintained special school placements for Autism or social and emotional mental health needs in the 2017/18 academic year, reflecting the upward trend. It is considered that the majority, if not all, of these would not have been required if sufficient suitable maintained special school capacity had been available. It is the future transfer pupils, rather than those already in independent non-maintained special schools, who would be the main targets for placements at the new schools. If 40 places per year could be diverted from the independent non-maintained special school sector to maintained schools as a result of this strategy, assuming a saving per place of approximately £30,000 this would reduce expenditure by around £1.2m in the first year, growing to the maximum saving within six years as the new school's fill.

Concluding Statement

This strategy focuses on delivering sufficient special educational needs and disabilities provision to ensure that capacity not only keeps up with population growth and increase in demand, but also reverses the trend towards the high number of placements in the independent non-maintained special school sector. This will require by 2022:

- Support for approximately 100 more pupils with Education Health and Care Plans in mainstream schools, to be supported via an enhanced network of resource bases;
- An additional 200 special school places to reverse the recent dependence on the independent non-maintained special school sector and ensure needs can be met through the local authority's provision.



The additional capacity will need to have a particular focus on social, emotional and mental health needs and Autism.

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As already indicated there will be a need to refresh this strategy annually to ensure that the population growth and the increase in requests for Education, Health and Care plans are monitored to ensure that the current projected growth has not been under estimated.

Appendix 1 – List of Current Resource Bases

The table below shows the resource bases and Special Educational Needs Units in Oxfordshire, as of 2017/18, including the primary need and the number of planned places. In total there are currently 165 places across these bases.

Table 2: Resource bases and Special Educational Needs Units in Oxfordshire schools

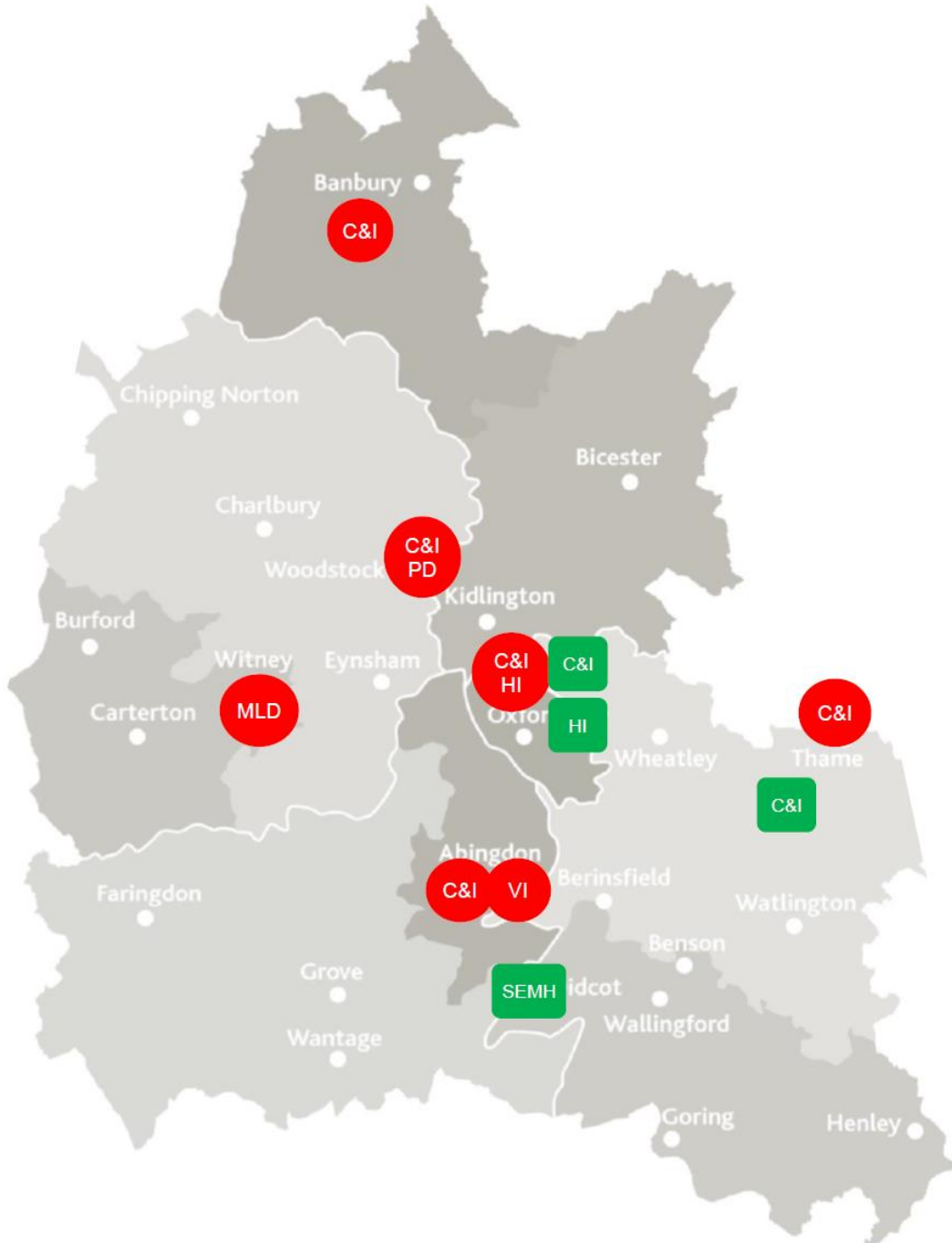
School	Location	Age range	Need	Planned Places
Cherwell	Oxford	Secondary	C&I	20
Cherwell	Oxford	Secondary	HI	10
Willowcroft – Didcot DEN	Didcot	Primary	SEMH	8
Fitzharrys	Abingdon	Secondary	C&I	12
Larkmead	Abingdon	Secondary	VI	8
Lord Williams	Thame	Secondary	C&I	20
Marlborough	Woodstock	Secondary	PD, C&I	25
New Marston	Oxford	Primary	HI	8
St Andrews	Chinnor	Primary	C&I	7
St Nicholas	Oxford	Primary	C&I	15
Warriner	Bloxham	Secondary	C&I	12
Woodgreen	Witney	Secondary	MLD	20

As shown in Map 1, secondary resource bases are currently reasonably well distributed across the county, although there is a relative shortage in the south of the county. Primary resource bases are concentrated in Oxford, Chinnor and Didcot, leaving significant geographic gaps.

Most resource bases are currently focused on the broad areas of Communication & Interaction (C&I) needs, which includes Speech, Language & Communication Needs and Autism Spectrum Disorders. There is only one resource base specially focused on Social, Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH) needs, and this only opened in 2017.

Appendix 1 - Map 1: Oxfordshire resource bases

- Resource bases – primary
- Resource bases – secondary



Appendix 2 – Current List of Oxfordshire’s Special Schools

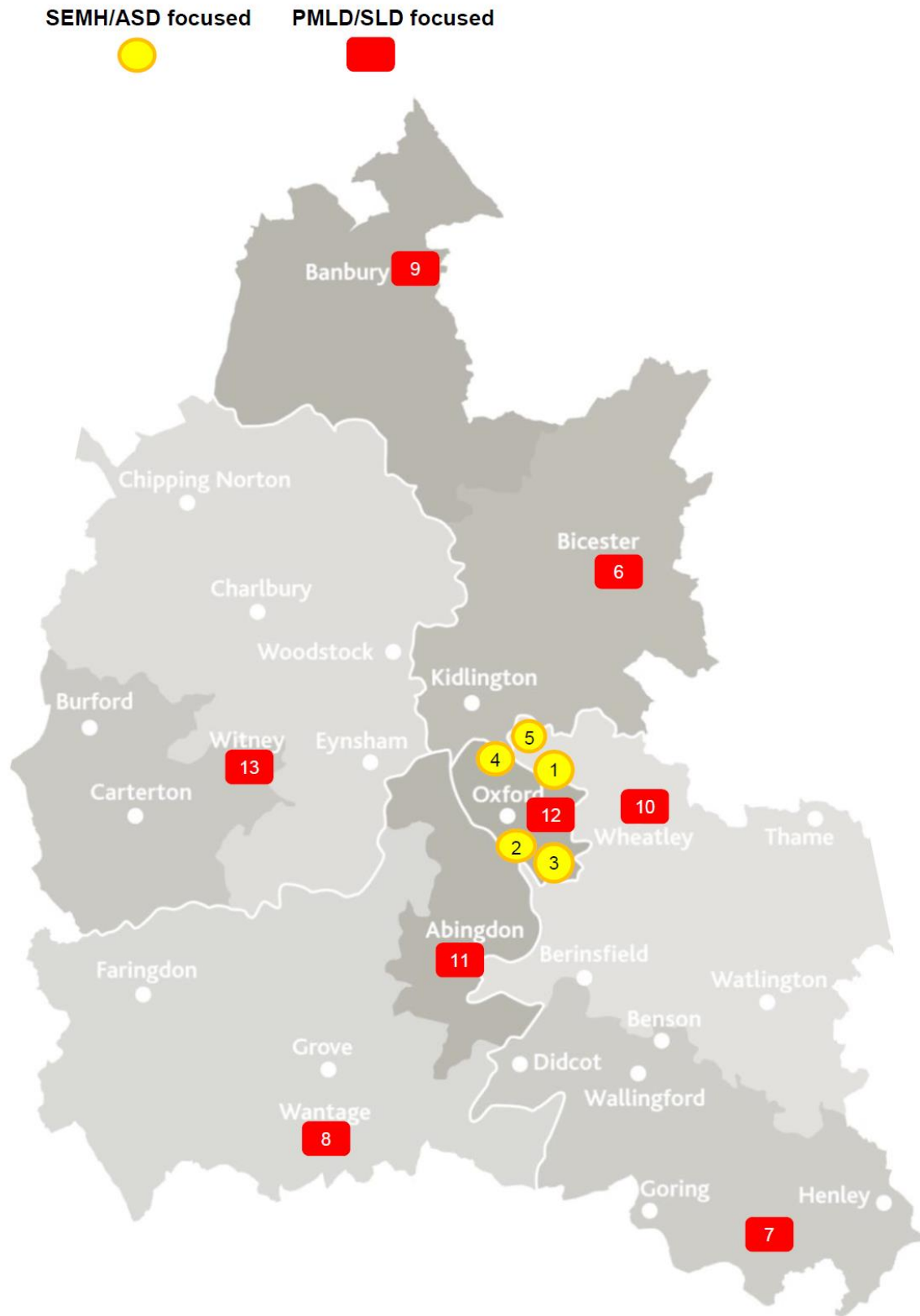
Oxfordshire’s special schools can be divided into two broad categories:

- Five county-wide schools focused chiefly on Social, Emotional & Mental Health needs and/or Autism Spectrum Disorders. These are in and around Oxford city:
 1. Endeavour Academy [Ofsted rating - Good]
 2. Iffley Academy (also has a high percentage of Moderate Learning Difficulties) [Ofsted rating - Outstanding]
 3. Northfield School [Ofsted rating - Good]
 4. Northern House School [Ofsted rating - Outstanding]
 5. Woodeaton Manor School [Ofsted rating - Good]
- Eight community special schools with a greater focus on Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties and Severe Learning Difficulties, as well as other complex needs, although in many cases also with a high percentage of pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders:
 6. Bardwell School – Bicester [Ofsted rating - Good]
 7. Bishopswood School – Henley & Sonning Common [Ofsted rating - Good]
 8. Fitzwaryn School – Wantage [Ofsted rating - Outstanding]
 9. Frank Wise School – Banbury [Ofsted rating - Outstanding]
 10. John Watson School – Wheatley [Ofsted rating - Good]
 11. Kingfisher School – Abingdon [Ofsted rating - Good]
 12. Mabel Prichard School – Oxford [Ofsted rating - Good]
 13. Springfield School – Witney [Ofsted rating - Good]

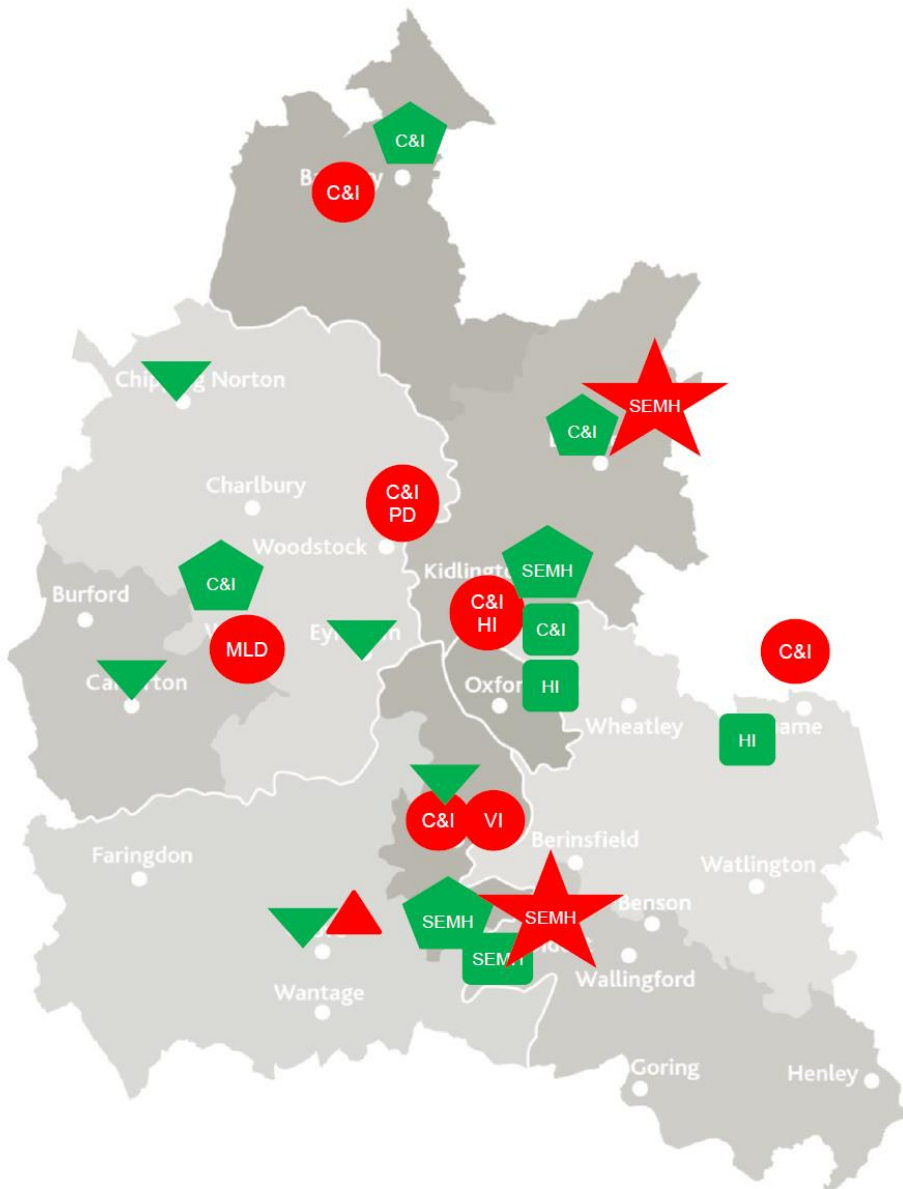
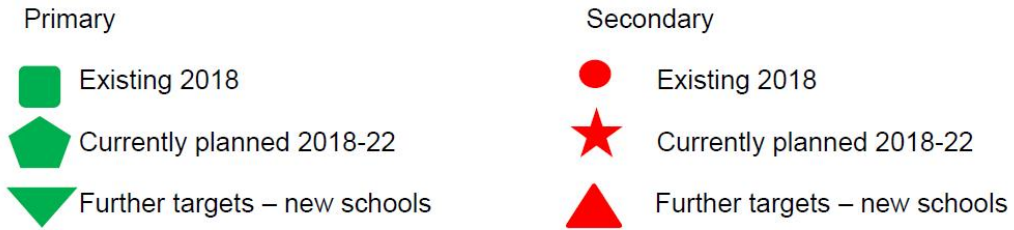
In addition, and not covered by this strategy, Meadowbrook College is an Alternative Provision academy located across three sites in Banbury, Oxford and Abingdon. The Oxfordshire Hospital School provides education for children medically unfit to attend school.

As shown in Appendix 2, Map 2 below, children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties and, Severe Learning Difficulties who attend community special schools are well distributed across the county, Oxfordshire’s current special school provision for social and emotional mental health needs, and Autism is concentrated in and around Oxford. Children and young people living outside Oxford have long journeys to access these schools.

Appendix 2 - Map 2: Oxfordshire special schools



Appendix 3: Map of Planned resource base provision due to open over the next 3 years.



Appendix 4: Oxfordshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Capital Investment Since 2011

1. Completed Projects (Additional Places and Suitability etc)

2011

- **Northern House School, Oxford - £1.308m – 8 additional places**
Construction of a new two-storey six classroom block to replace a two-classroom timber building, a Horsa classroom building and a double temporary classroom all of which were in poor condition with limited life expectancy and significant suitability issues. The project included an additional classroom and a food technology and life skills provision following a successful application by Oxfordshire County Council for grant funding from the Department for Education.

2012

- **Woodeaton Manor School - £227k – 6 additional places**
Construction of a new classroom building to provide additional accommodation to support the lowering of the age range of the school.

2014

- **New Endeavour Academy - £4.292m – 25 additional places**
Construction of accommodation for the new Endeavour Academy residential school for young people with autism. The project includes the remodel of a former school building to create a secondary school facility incorporating class bases for KS3, KS4 & KS5 pupils and ancillary accommodation. A new 12-bedroom residential unit was constructed with the grounds comprising 2 kitchens and dining areas and a central social area.

2015

- **Bardwell School Bicester - £1.388m – 9 additional places**
Replacement of prefabricated 'temporary' buildings with purpose built sixth form accommodation, part funded from successful bid by Oxfordshire County Council to the Department for Education's Demographic Growth Capital Fund.

2016

- **Frank Wise School, Banbury - £1.920m – 8 additional places**
Replacement of prefabricated 'temporary' buildings with purpose built sixth form accommodation, part funded from successful bid by Oxfordshire County Council to the Department for Education's Demographic Growth Capital Fund.
- **The Iffley Academy, Oxford - £30k – 8 additional places**
Internal alterations and remodelling to create an additional classroom. The project was undertaken by the Academy with grant funding from Oxfordshire County Council.
- **Northfield Special School, Oxford - £250k – 16 additional places**
Provision of 2 classroom building to provide additional accommodation to support increase in capacity

2017

- **Mabel Prichard Special School, Oxford - £356k – 8 additional places**
Internal alterations to convert former classroom space, being used for Design & Technology/Art, in to a KS2 classroom. Construction of a new Design & Technology/Art facility.
- **Woodeaton Manor Special School - £44k – 16 additional places**
Internal reorganisation to relocate the boys residential facility elsewhere on site and convert former residential accommodation to create 2 new classrooms. Project undertaken by Foundation School with grant funding from Oxfordshire County Council.
- **Kingfisher Special School, Abingdon - £480k – 8 additional places**
Replacement of prefabricated ‘temporary’ building with new 3-classroom block. Project managed by Academy Trust with funding provided by Oxfordshire County Council. Construction work commenced on site summer 2017.

2018

- **Fitzwaryn Special School, Wantage - £560k – 16 additional places**
Internal reorganisation and remodelling alongside new build post 16 accommodation to create 2 additional classrooms. If approved the project will be managed by the Trust with grant funding from Oxfordshire County Council.
- **Bardwell Special School, Bicester - £63k – 16 additional places**
Conversion of former Children’s Centre building to provide Foundation Stage facility for Bardwell School. Relocation of Foundation Stage children will release 2 classrooms within the main school building to provide 16 additional pupil places. Scope of works being investigated by the school, work forecast to be complete within 2017/18 financial year. Work to be undertaken by the school with grant funding from Oxfordshire County Council.

2019

- **John Watson Special School, Wheatley - £1.739m – 16 additional places**
Primary - Proposals for expansion of the primary site subject to significant delay (Carillion), project reviewed and alternative scheme now being progressed which reorganises existing accommodation and relocates Oxfordshire County Council staff from ‘Wheatley Centre’. Initial funding has been identified within the council’s capital programme. Additional classrooms for John Watson Special School required 2018 (temporary use of former Primary School ICT room) and 2019.

Total Investment = £14.590m**Total Additional Places = 169****2020**

- **New Iffley North Special School - £n/a – 100 additional places**
Successful Free School application for new school catering for pupils aged 7 – 18. Project delivered by Education & Skills Funding Agency. To be co-located with Warriner School, Bloxham.

Appendix 5: Project Development

1. Specialist Resourced Provision in New Schools - confirmed

- 2018 Aureus Primary School, Didcot – 8 places, Social and Emotional Mental Health needs
- 2018 Aureus Secondary School, Didcot – growing to 20 places, Social and Emotional Mental Health needs
- 2018 Gagle Brook Primary School, Bicester – 6 places, Communication and Interaction
- 2020 SW Bicester secondary school – 8 places, Social and Emotional Mental Health needs
- 2020 Southam Road Primary School – 10 places, Communication and Interaction (initially in Longford Park School 2018)
- 2020 Barton Primary School, Oxford – 8 places, Social and Emotional Mental Health needs
- 2020 New west Witney primary school – 8 places, Communication and Interaction

2. Projects In Development – Funding Approved – Delivery Timescale To Be Confirmed

- **Bardwell Special School, Bicester – 16 additional places**
Initial Option Appraisal work has been undertaken to explore the potential to address the problems created by the small school hall and provide additional capacity. Preferred solution is to convert the hall to a classroom and construct a new school hall and further classroom. Funded from Special Provision Fund and Section 106 'developer funding'.
- **John Watson Special School, Wheatley – 16 additional places**
Secondary -Feasibility work is underway to explore how best to replace an aged prefabricated 'temporary' building on the secondary school site and provide additional capacity. Funded from Special Provision Fund and Section 106 'developer funding'.

3. Projects in Development – Funding to be Identified

- **Bishopswood (Secondary), Sonning Common**
Proposal to relocate existing provision (except hydrotherapy pool) from shared accommodation into vacant standalone building previously used by Chiltern Edge School. Project would address existing deficiencies and create additional accommodation.
- **New Didcot Special Educational Needs School – Funding To Be Confirmed**
Site to be provided as part of Valley Park housing development. Financial implications for Oxfordshire County Council for site purchase and construction cost over and above developer contribution. Potential free school project subject to Wave Free School Programme bid.
- **Rebuild of Northfield School**
Proposal to rebuild and relocate the current school in a different position on the current school site. To increase the pupil numbers at the school to around

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100 places. To be funded from Special Provision Fund and Section 106 developer funding.

In the remainder of the 2018-22 period this is likely to be where already permitted housing development includes new schools:

- Grove Airfield: potential for both primary and secondary resource bases within new school(s) – Social and Emotional Mental Health needs, target date 2022.
- North Abingdon – new primary school
- East Carterton – new primary school

While planned new mainstream schools provide the greatest opportunity for adding resource bases, there would remain some gaps in coverage, and further exploration will be needed into opportunities for incorporating resource bases within existing schools, especially in the south-eastern and south-western corners of the county. Given the concentration of population within Oxford City, a further resource base here would also be of value.

In the 2023-28 period, further new schools are expected due to housing development proposed but not yet confirmed through the Local Plan process, including:

- Chipping Norton – new primary school
- Eynsham – new primary schools
- Cherwell's Oxford Unmet Needs sites
- Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan proposed sites.

Resource requirements

- The capital costs of resource bases through new schools are sought from developers through Section 106 agreements as part of the total school cost.
- The operating costs of bases will be provided through high needs block allocations.

Risks

- The timing of new schools is subject to the progress of delivery of the associated housing developments, and therefore some resource bases may be delayed by factors beyond the council's control.
- Some new schools – and hence resource bases – may not be fully funded from developer contributions.
- Where no new school is planned, resource bases would need to be agreed within existing schools, and it may not be possible to reach agreement in all areas.