

**SPECIAL  
EDUCATIONAL  
NEEDS AND  
DISABILITY  
0-25<sup>IN</sup>  
KNOWSLEY**

**SUFFICIENCY PLAN  
2023-2028**

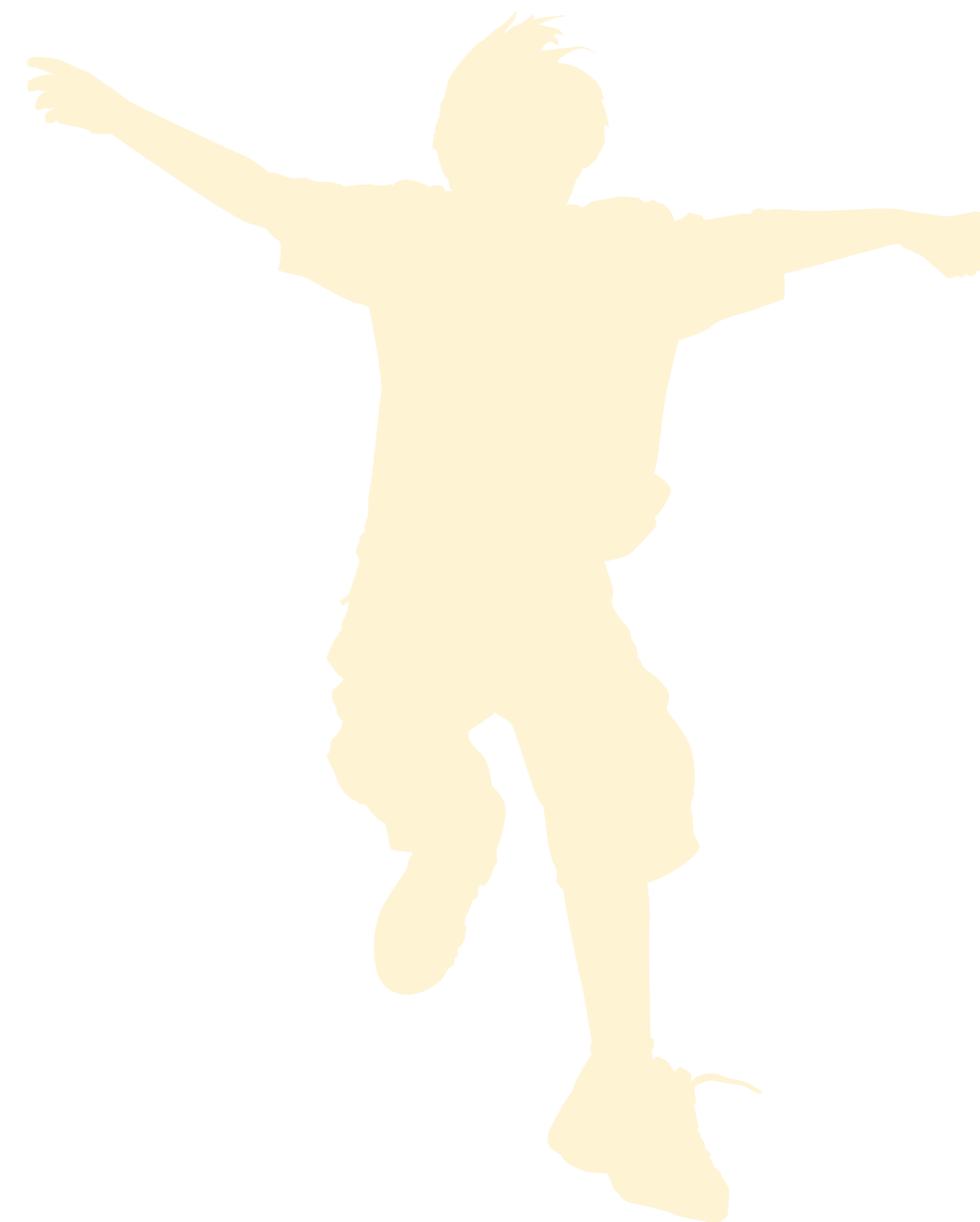


Knowsley  
**CHILDREN &  
FAMILIES**  
Board



# CONTENTS

Vision	5
Co-production	6
Key principles of the SEND Code of Practice	7
Local context – numbers	11
Local context – funding	12
Key challenges	13
Strategic priorities	15
Achievements to date	18
Next Steps for our Sufficiency Plan	20
Funding and Governance	22





# VISION

The vision of the sufficiency plan is to enable all Children and Young People the opportunity to access high quality educational settings that maximise their potential and meet needs well.

The special educational needs and disability (SEND) sufficiency plan contributes to the vision, outcomes and priorities for children and families in Knowsley agreed by the Children and Families Partnership Board, SEND Partnership Board and the Children and Families Plan 2021. Our **Children and Families Plan** focuses on three priorities:

## **PRIORITY ONE: Prevention to give children the best start in life**

This plan works towards this broader outcome by maximising the opportunities to be educated close to home through a range of educational settings across all age phases.

## **PRIORITY TWO: Education to improve life chances**

This plan works towards this broader outcome by enhancing the offer our existing schools provide.

## **PRIORITY THREE: Family supporting families to thrive**

The outcomes in relation to preparing children and young people for adulthood are known to improve when students are able to access local provision and it is within this context that the sufficiency plan works towards this broader outcome.

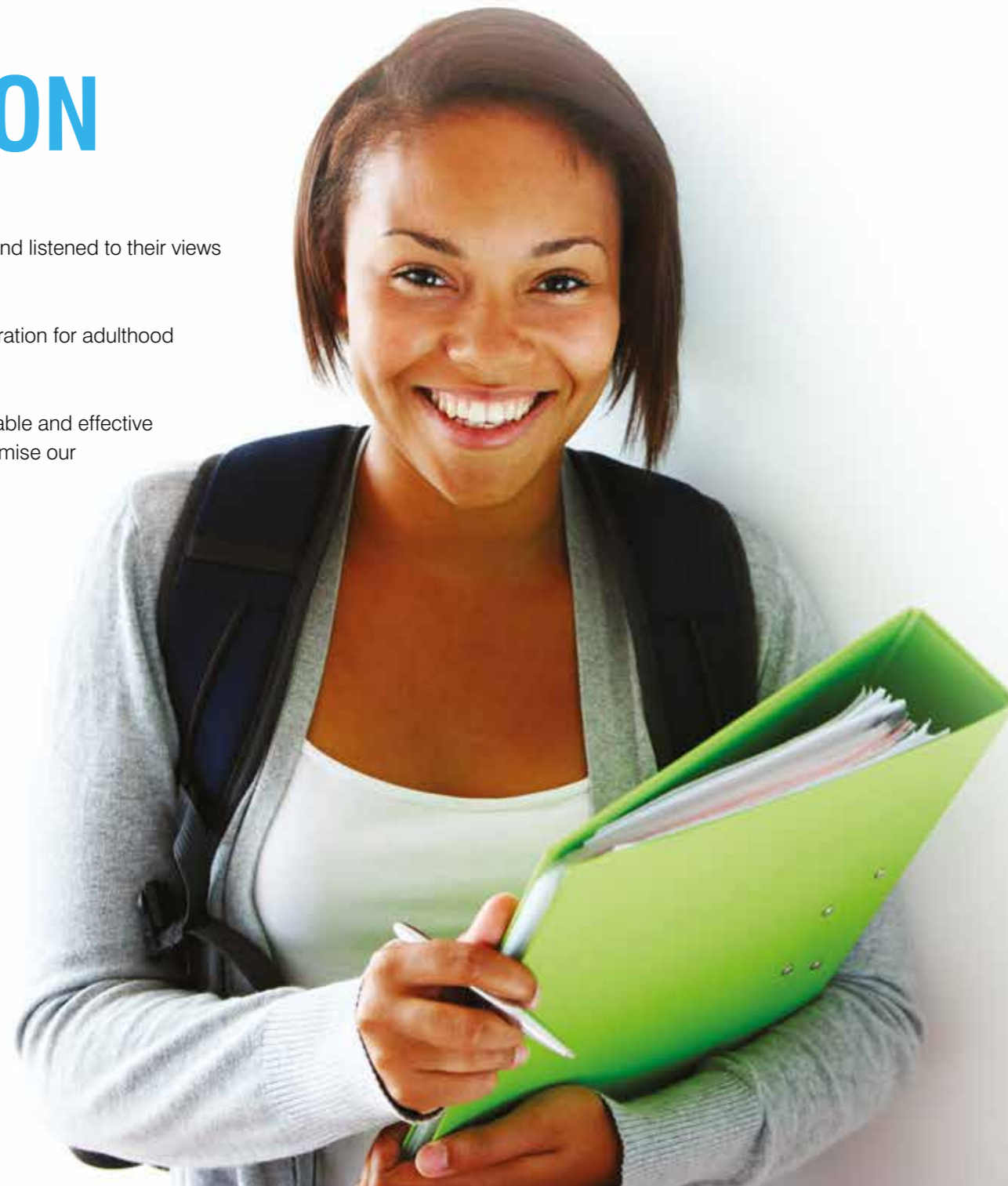


# CO-PRODUCTION

In creating this plan we worked with local parents and carers and listened to their views through multiple engagement events throughout 2022.

We also worked with our young people through specific preparation for adulthood engagement sessions.

All of our schools were invited to work with us and identify suitable and effective use of existing space, provision and financial resource to maximise our sufficiency planning.



# KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE SEND CODE OF PRACTICE

The SEND reforms in 2014 prioritised inclusive practice and children and young people's right to participate in mainstream education within their local community.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years set out a series of principles designed to support:

- The participation of children, their parents and young people in decision-making
- The early identification of children and young people's needs and early intervention to support them
- Greater choice and control for young people and parents over support
- Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support
- High quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN
- A focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- Successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment







# LOCAL CONTEXT – NUMBERS



**5.3%**  
of children and young people in Knowsley have EHCPs, compared to 4.2% locally and 4% nationally.



**44.9%**  
of children and young people with EHCPs attend a special school or specialist college in Knowsley, compared to 36.5% nationally.



**£8.225m**  
is the cost of independent and non-maintained special school placements in Knowsley as of March 2022.



**30%** of children and young people with EHCPs in Knowsley have either an autism spectrum condition (ASC) or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. This is the assessed need that results in the highest cost placements and the most out of borough placements for the authority.

The table below shows the growth in the number of new EHCP's, total number of EHCP's and number of pupils attending specialist provision over the last six years for additional context.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
New EHC Plans Issued to date	142	160	214	233	221	245
Total EHC Plans	1072	1190	1275	1497	1718	1876
No. in specialist schools	547	573	607	636	692	748
No. in specialist schools inc post 16	571	603	623	693	757	835



# LOCAL CONTEXT – FUNDING

Knowsley's High Needs Block Allocation is currently £30.820m for 2022/23. The forecast estimate for 2022/23 is that there will be a cumulative deficit of £6.022m at the year end.

The high needs block is a ring fenced grant provided to the local authority by the Education, Funding and Skills Agency through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). It is separate to the councils main balance and accounts. Income and expenditure across the DSG is managed and monitored locally through schools forum.

One source of additional funding has been made available to increase local sufficiency of SEND provision in Knowsley. The SEND Capital Grant is a central grant made available to all local authorities to improve existing provision or commission new special school places. Whilst this is a small amount compared to demand, this money will be used to create additional special school places across several projects in Knowsley. The SEND High Needs Provision Capital Allocation available for 2021/22 to 2023/24 is £5.389m.



# KEY CHALLENGES

Between 2014 and 2019 the number of children and young people with education, health and care plans (EHCP) has risen by 47% nationally.

In 2022 alone Knowsley saw over a 50% increase in requests for EHC needs assessments.

In the same period the number of children and young people educated in special schools and specialist colleges has risen by 29%.

In Knowsley more of our children and young people on EHCP's are educated within special schools compared to local and national comparisons. (33.8% of children with EHCP's attend mainstream provision as opposed to a national average of 40.5%- a 6.7% difference)

In Knowsley the special sector is in high demand presenting sufficiency challenges and demand continues to outweigh supply of placement.

Nationally, the average spend on high needs has increased and high needs block allocations exceed of existing levels of expenditure.

In Knowsley 51.6% of the high needs block expenditure is on special school places and top-up funding for children and young people with EHCPs. This will vary slightly from local authority to local authority however for Knowsley this is a similar position to that of other local authorities nationally.

Despite a small increase to the budget this year, net deficit is still expected to rise both locally and nationally over the next 3-4 years.





# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The priorities for ensuring sufficiency of SEND provision in Knowsley over the next five years are based upon the principles and challenges identified above and build upon the priorities agreed within the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2026.

These are as follows:

**PRIORITY 1: Improving our Information, Advice and Support Offer**

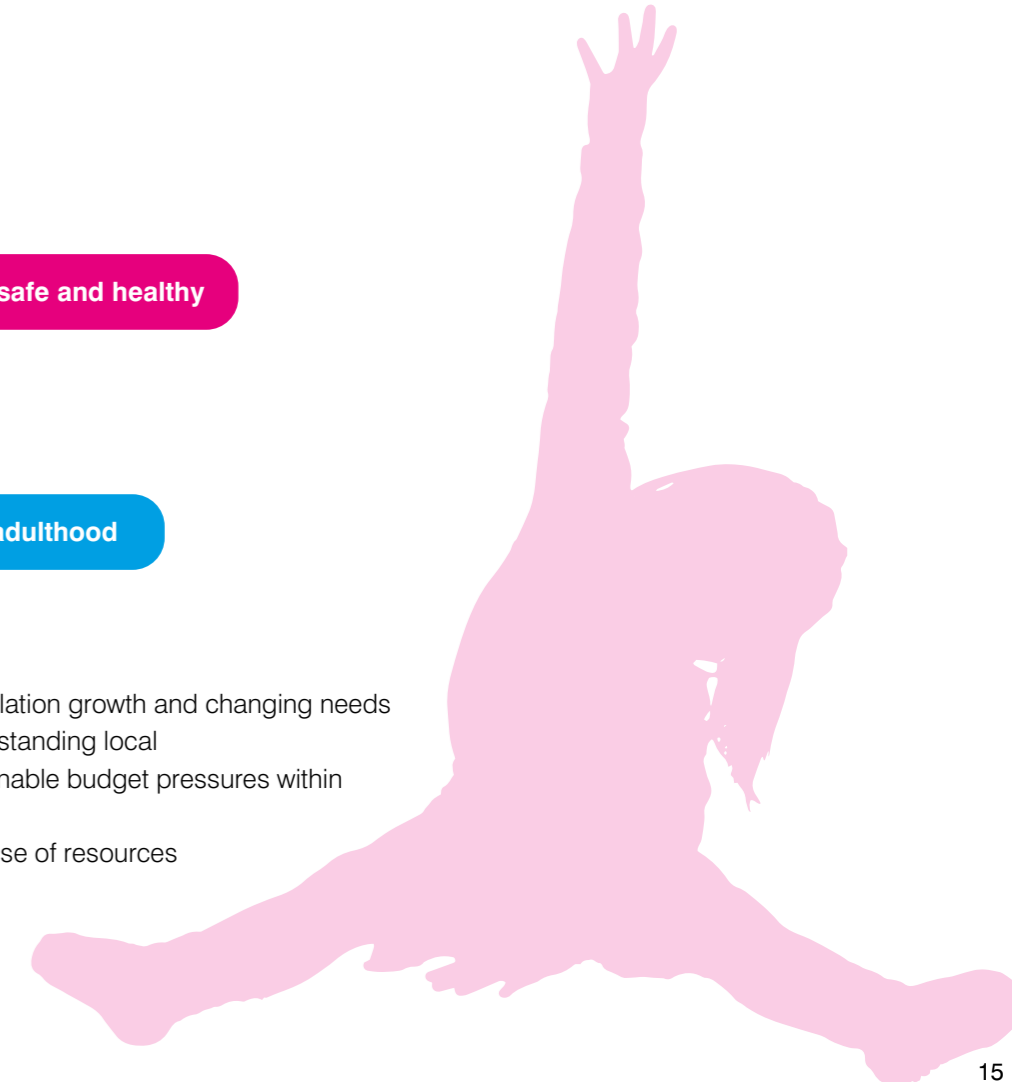
**PRIORITY 2: Ensuring our Children and Young people are supported to be safe and healthy**

**PRIORITY 3: Improve the educational experience for pupils with SEND**

**PRIORITY 4: Ensuring all our Children and Young people are prepared for adulthood**

To align this plan within the existing strategy framework we need to ensure we:

- Develop a consistent offer, which provides choice and ensures equity of access
- Ensure sufficiency of provision that will accommodate predicted increase in population growth and changing needs
- Ensure the efficient use of resources by maximising the capacity of good and outstanding local specialist provision and reviewing underutilised provision to address the unsustainable budget pressures within high needs funding
- Working collaboratively with neighbouring councils to seek to maximise efficient use of resources where possible
- Supporting our mainstream settings to meet increasing complexity of needs
- Work with mainstream settings to generate a thriving and varied Alternative Provision sector







# ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

To date the following has been achieved:

In the academic year 2018/19 **Phase 1** of our recovery work was implemented; this included:

- Commission of First Planner to complete Special **School sufficiency** overview leading to
- Establishment of Post 19 Provision **Flourish** for young people with complex needs – this ensures that young people can remain in the borough and transition to adulthood improved. This provision was co-produced with Knowsley Parent Carer Voice (**4 places initially rising to a maximum of 12**)
- Expansion of Alt Bridge Secondary School to increase KS3 provision by **38 places** – this ensures that provision is suitable for young people and creates space within the primary sector
- Further expansion of **8 places** at Knowsley Central Primary School – reduces out of borough placement

**Phase 2** sufficiency work implemented over the 2019/20 academic year was as follows:

- Expansion of the alternative provision available at **Meadow Park**. The Local Authority worked with the Head Teacher and Governors to consider how provision may be viably extended to support some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough. The work resulted in **40** commissioned “turn-around” placements that schools could directly procure
- The Council invested in the establishment of nurture provision for KS1 children. The KS1 provision provides placement for young children at

SEN support who require specialised support to enable them to thrive within a mainstream setting; Acorns at Meadow Park was created to meet this need offering **12 KS1 placements**

- Capital investment in renovations to Knowsley Central Primary School to ensure existing **KS3 provision** is appropriate for younger pupils
- Bands of Learning descriptors and guidance produced and circulated to schools to support the **graduated approach** and principles of thrive and plan, do, review
- The further expansion of Flourish FE to **8 learners**

**Phase 3** sufficiency work for the academic year 2020/21 focused on:

- A scoping exercise to determine the viability of **further expanding** primary provision within the special sector – still ongoing
- A review of the Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) provision within the borough and scoping of future developments resulting in the Finch Woods Academy expansion from **50-80 places** specifically for Knowsley pupils
- The further expansion of Flourish FE to maximum capacity of **12 pupils**

**Further work** outside the above phases has also occurred to bolster local sufficiency including:

- Capital Investment in Alt Bridge increasing places from **200 to 238**
- Recruitment of a **Specialist ASC** Advisory Teacher Post
- Engagement and sign up to the SEND **Placement Framework** across the Northwest allowing for greater transparency of placement cost in the Independent and Non-Maintained sector



# NEXT STEPS FOR OUR SUFFICIENCY PLAN

## Short-term action

1. Establish **12 additional** SEMH places at Finch Woods Academy for Key Stage 2 pupils addressing the gap in primary SEMH provision in the borough. This project has been approved utilising the SEND Capital Grant and is expected to be delivered March 2023
2. Review of all Out of Borough Placements to ensure **value for money** within the INMSS and our pupils are in receipt of the support we have assessed them as requiring
3. Embed the SEN Quality Assurance Review across all settings to support peer led improvement in inclusive practice in partnership with schools. This allows the council to ensure that mainstream schools are practicing in an **Inclusive** way. Our local area SEND Inspection in March 2022 highlighted that some settings need to be more inclusive, and we can use this process to improve this
4. Develop flexible approaches which support **integrated pathways** across mainstream, alternative and specialist provision, to improve **transition** between placements and into adult services for children and young people with SEND
5. Creation of Bluebell Park Satellite Provision at Eastcroft Park Primary to deliver **17 additional** Early Years SLD Specialist Places

## Medium term action

1. Continue the programme of workforce development in partnership with schools, to build on the SEND **Quality Assurance** Framework and SENDCO forum developments to enhance Inclusive practice and upskilling mainstream provision to maintain pupils with SEND longer
2. Undertake more preventative and **early intervention** work through strengthening partnership working” between education and children’s services to support inclusion of children and young people within local mainstream schools
3. Exploration of significant asset development of the Knowsley Central site to potentially deliver **20 additional** primary ASC and SLD places. This is in development and exploration stage
4. A review of financial formulas associated with the High Needs Block in line with the outcomes and dependent upon the next steps of the **SEND Green Paper**. This will not result in cost savings however may reallocate money differently across the system

## Long term action

1. Exploration of Bluebell Park Further Education satellite provision to create an additional **12 places** in the main school
2. Asset development work at Alt Bridge to increase capacity by a further **20 secondary** placements accounting for the increase delivered at Knowsley Central
3. Ongoing dialogue with independent providers for the **creation of new schools** in the borough
4. Where feasible and within partnership agreements creation of an additional **Dedicated Special Provision** or HUBS within existing mainstream settings
5. Analysis of the **feasibility study** for a potential new school within the borough



# FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE

## Schools' Forum

A framework for reporting the effectiveness and efficiency of high needs block spending in Knowsley exists through regular reporting to school's forum. These reports set out the range of measures to ensure the high needs funding received by the local authority is used to increase inclusion and support improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The future priorities for action to improve inclusion along with improving effectiveness and efficiency of resources will assist in addressing the forecast overspends over the coming years. School Forum will assist in monitoring progress and outcomes of these priorities alongside the SEND Partnership Board.

The Head of Service Inclusion will work with the DSG sub-group of Schools forum to agree and implement actions listed above, in addition to further actions or other reasonable measures permitted to control expenditure.

## SEND Partnership Board

### Strategic coherence and a consistent approach

The Sufficiency Plan is part of the Council's local strategic framework which is set by Knowsley's overarching 10-year partnership strategy – Knowsley 2030. Within this framework, several other strategies and plans have been developed to ensure that our local strategic approach is coherent – and that for our children, young people and families – arrangements and processes are consistent and streamlined, underpinning the way that we work is Knowsley Better Together – a shift in culture that is focused on the Council working in equal partnership with residents, businesses, partners, and the voluntary sector more to share ideas, skills and time to achieve our shared goals and vision, improving outcomes for Knowsley.

### Arrangements for Governance

Decisions relating to the SEND Sufficiency Strategy are agreed at the SEND Partnership Board.

The active engagement of schools will be supported through Knowsley Schools' Forum collaborative meetings and Head Teacher briefing sessions.



The interface between the above is monitored through the Director Children's Services Assurance Meetings and Health and Wellbeing Board.

