

Ash Field Academy Staff, Parents and Pupils Consultation

7 December 8.30am – 11.30am

Present throughout: Tracie Rees (TR), Clare Nagle (CN), Jenny Eshelby (JE), Bev Snow (BS)

Acronyms

ASD – Autism spectrum disorder

CYP - Children and Young People

DfE - Department of Education

EHCP - Education Health and Care Plan

HNB - High Needs Block Funding

LA – Local Authority

SEND - Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Part 1: Residential Staff Consultation

TR provided an introduction and background to the consultation to staff

- Significant pressure on LA budgets, services will need to be reduced or ceased, could include statutory provision. Most services are funded from the General Fund.
- The Residential provision at Ash Field is paid for by High Needs Block (HNB), which is directly funded by the government.
- Currently Leicester City Council has a forecast overspend 22/23 of the HNB of just under £6m, which is due to not enough money being received from central government. This money is ring fenced for children and young people (CYP) with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the city.
- In Leicester we have 3,300 CYP with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and another 10,000 pupils with SEND needs in mainstream schools, which also requires additional funding, all funded from HNB
- The number of CYP with SEND has increased in Leicester by 9% year on year for the last 2 years. This reflects the national picture. The council has a legal duty to provide support and education for these pupils.
- Government is putting pressure on local authorities to reduce their overspend. TR was interviewed by the Department of Education (DfE) and asked what plans were in place to reduce £6m overspend. TR confirmed all options were being considered.
 - Ash Field Academy was not only provision with a residential provision funded from the HNB. Millgate special school has a residential provision, and the council withdrew the monies as it was deemed to be non-educational.

- The Council is reviewing its statutory respite / short break provision for CYP with SEND to ensure it is flexible and responds to changing needs and increased demand. This includes looking at options funded with Health.
- The Ash Field consultation report seeks to withdraw the funding for the non-statutory Residential Provision (over £400,000 per year) in September 2024.
- No decision has been taken yet and the consultation extended until 9 January following publication of the report.
- Once the consultation ends the feedback will be presented to the Lead Member (Cllr Elly Cutkelvin) and the City Mayor and Executive to make an informed decision.
- A report will also be shared with Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission.
- Officers from the Council have met with Jenny and Chair of Governors regarding the provision being available to a wider cohort of CYP as a possible option to support the council's statutory respite / short break provision. This would not be funded from the HNB monies.
- Jenny confirmed the school wants to wait until consultation process and a decision before they consider anything else. However, there are concerns about the safety of the CYP at the school if others with complex social care needs were able to use the provision.

Q1: In school day what is classed as education?

A1: TR explained that all EHCPs should be delivered within the 25-hour school week. However, it was accepted that not all CYP could not undertake academic qualifications because of their complex health and care needs, and for some individual's functional skills to support independence would be noted as an outcome in their EHCP.

JE confirmed 9 Ash Field pupils have it noted on their EHCPs that they 'would benefit' from the Residential Provision.

TR confirmed none of the EHCP's stated 'it must provide' in section F. Therefore, the council does not have a legal duty to fund this provision.

Q2: When were the EHCPs last check?

A2: The council last checked EHCP's of pupils from Ash Field in mid-October 2022.

Q3: How will the school deliver the additional learning if the Residential Provision was closed, as it would not be possible to cram additional hours into the school day?

A3: TR explained that she was aware that not all CYP at Ash Field Academy used the Residential Provision and had not been advised that the school was not able to deliver the requirements of the EHCP's for those who didn't access the facility. Therefore, she understood that the school could deliver the required support within the normal school week for the majority of pupils. She also explained that other schools, such as Nether Hall have CYP with similar needs, who can deliver the outcome of individuals EHCP's during the school day. TR advised that the council

recognises how good the provision is, and ideally it would be good to give it to all SEND CYP, but this is not financially viable.

Q4: Is the overspend down to the City's poor financial management?

A4: TR explained that other Local Authorities have similar challenges, with far more with higher deficits when compared to the city. When contacted by DfE, she did ask is there anything else Leicester could do to reduce costs and wasn't advised of anything else to consider.

Q5: CYP have been referred to the school because of its Residential Provision and therefore the requirement did not need to be included in the EHCP, because it was part of the school offer.

A5: TR advised she was not aware of this position and 'consults' are made that matches the CYP educational needs as defined in Section F. However, she would check with the relevant staff to understand if any recent referrals have been made based on the Residential Provision.

Q6: What defines education?

A6: TR explained that CYP with complex SEND needs may have their educational outcomes noted in their EHCP as functional skills to support independence, rather than academic achievements. However, any outcomes noted in Section F of an EHCP should be deliverable within the 25-hour school week. TR acknowledged that the Residential Provision was noted as outstanding by Ofsted and she understood that it provided the opportunity for developing friendships and further learning, especially skills around independence.

Q7: Why inspected by Ofsted if not education?

A7a: JE noted Ofsted inspected due to registration Residential Special School, with specific guidelines and governance.

A7b: TR advised the authority takes on board the Ofsted registration point.

Q8: Why is a labour LA cutting funding?

A9: TR explained that all LA's are having their budgets cut by central government and the council's City Mayor and Executive is having to make difficult decisions about the future of services.

Q10: A request was made for the City Mayor to meet with those affected at Ash Field.

A10: TR agreed to ask the Lead Member (Cllr Elly Cutkelvin) and City Mayor to attend a future meeting.

Q11: What is the reason for recommending for withdrawal?

A11: TR explained that the council needs to reduce its spend on the HNB, therefore all non-statutory services were being considered, this includes Ash Fields Residential Provision which spends over £400k per year on the facility.

Q12: How justify blue pathway? Some pupils not on that pathway. What do you determine in education?

A12a: TR explained that some CYP with complex needs, may have their educational outcomes noted as functional skills, rather than academic achievements. However, any outcomes noted in Section F of an EHCP should be deliverable within the 25-hour school week. TR explained that education We know some is functional schools and deemed to be delivered during the school day. Nether hall School same cohort, school able to support during the day.

A12b: JE explained that those attending Nether Hall school are likely to have better outcomes if they had access to residential provision.

A12c: TR explained that in an ideal world all CYP would benefit if more money could be spent on residential support and extending the school day, but this was not financially viable.

Q13: Doesn't the council realise that if CYP are not able to support themselves in the future, it will cost the council more as they will be reliant on Social Care?

A13: TR explained that it was important to support all CYP with SEND needs to develop independence skills and work was currently in progress with the Leicester college to develop their 16 plus offer, with an increased focus on functional skills.

Q14: It is better to teach functional skills earlier in life, rather than waiting until they are 16 years old. The staff member noted from personal experience, Leicester College had failed a young person as no package of support was available.

A14: TR advised that Leicester college was willing to develop their offer and wanted to work with the council and special schools to develop a comprehensive package linked to an internship programme.

Q15: Is Leicester City Council funding Leicester College?

A15: TR advised that Further Education is funded directly from government. The council were approached Leicester College, to understand why referrals are dropping. Placement sufficiency data was shared with them, and it was explained that an improved 16 plus offer was needed linked to internships and employment opportunities. The college confirmed they are keen to work to develop this approach.

Q16: The report is full of holes; council staff only spent a few hours in the school so have made a judgement / assumption without the full facts.

- Shocking the Council can write reports – no context about the school works. These CYP are the most vulnerable and needy in the society.
- The Council should get rid of things like electric bikes and focus on its CYP
- Should be able to provide this provision to every child.

A16: TR explained that the purpose of the consultation was to receive feedback and therefore if the report does not correctly reflect the Residential provision and what is achieved for the CYP attending the facility, this needs to be included in the feedback, which will be considered by the Lead Member (Cllr Elly Cutkelvin), City Mayor and Executive, which will be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Q17: Rather than accepting the situation the Council should be challenging the situation. Is the Council fighting the government to increase the funding?

A17: TR explained that she is aware that representation is made wherever possible.

Q18: Why was the report only made available 4 weeks ago when Unison challenged.

A18: TR explained that the report had been published and the consultation had been extended until 9 January 2023 to enable a full 12-week consultation period.

Q19: Why isn't Peter Soulsby fighting for more funding, why doesn't he refuse to make cuts? If the politicians won't fight, then Unison will.

A19: TR explained this is a political question and will ask the politicians to respond.

Q20: If funding is ceased, the money would be used somewhere else. Why can't you use funding from somewhere else and put in the HNB?

A20: TR explained that the council's General Fund is also in a difficult position and is moving towards the provision of statutory services only.

Q21: How can the council fund non-Ash Field CYP if there is no money?

A21: TR explained that the council has a statutory duty to provide respite / short breaks support for eligible CYP, which is funded from the General Fund. The council currently provides a Direct Payment to support families to secure respite support and in some cases uses the council's own residential home at Barnes Health House for short breaks. However, places are limited, and the council is currently reviewing the provision to ensure more places are available in the future, this includes options to work and share costs with health. Discussions have taken place with Jenny and the Governors to seek their views on potentially using the Residential Provision for non-Ash Field CYP.

Q22: Do you know where the Residential Provision is based? It is in a corridor in the middle of the school. If other pupils were placed there, they wouldn't be able to use facilities as the pupils do at Ash Field? As registered as a Special School – only have a corridor, bedroom and lounge – where can they do activities not facilities. If the decision to open to wider children and young people, would Ash Field pupils have priority?

A22: This would be a discussion for the future, if the school decides to open up the Residential Provision.

JE, the first cohort were identified as medical and then complex ASD, this mix would not be safe for Ash Field CYP.

It was noted the date of school opening was wrong, TR confirmed the council will change and update in the next report.

Q23: A request was made to ask the decision makers to get to know what the school does and value the provision provides before making a decision.

A23: TR advised she would make a request to politicians.

- Staff noted Ash Field Academy is like a beacon, with recent visitors from Malaysia, it is unique and needs to be kept alive.
- It doesn't feel the Council understand what the school is offering, how you make recommendations based on short visit.

Q24: Recent budget reports new money, £2 billion, what is coming into Leicester?

A24: TR explained that no details have been received as yet, but Leicester is likely to receive in the region of £3m, which is still not enough to cover the current overspend to the HNB.

Q25: Feels like the decision has already been made and you have taken everything we have discussed negatively.

A25: TR explained that she has responded to the questions asked, but the minutes from the meeting will be shared with the Lead Member, City Mayor and Executive as part of the decision-making process. However, she also explained that the school and individual staff members and their union representatives can provide feedback on the proposal and advise of any misrepresentations.

Q26: Who is the Executive made up of?

A26: Executive made up of Elected Members – Sir Peter Soulsby (City Mayor), Cllr Adam Clarke, Cllr Piara Singh, Cllr Sarah Russell, Cllr Danny Meyers, Cllr Elly Cutkelvin, Cllr Mustafa Malik, Cllr Sue Hunter, Cllr Vi Dempster.

Q27: It feels like the whole meeting, is about ticking boxes, it feels you have made decision and ticking box – we had meeting and seen the staff.

A27: TR to invite City Mayor/Executive to the school.

Part 2: Parents

Jenny Provided an introduction from the school

Tracie Rees introduced herself as Director for SEND and Early Help at the City Council, with Clare Nagle in attendance taking notes. TR confirmed the consultation was open to 9 January. If parents have already provided a response, they can provide further feedback following the publication of the report.

Q1: Can the school send further clarification out to parents regarding this point?

A1: JE confirmed the school will send further clarification out to parents.

- TR provided an overview of the rationale behind the proposal.
- Significant pressure on LA budgets, services will need to be reduced or ceased, could include statutory provision. Most services are funded from the General Fund.
- The Residential provision at Ash Field is paid for by High Needs Block (HNB), which is directly funded by the government.
- Currently Leicester City Council has a forecast overspent 22/23 of the HNB of just under £6m, which is due to not enough money being received from central government. This money is ring fenced for children and young people (CYP) with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in the city.
- In Leicester we have 3,300 CYP with and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and another 10,000 pupils with SEND needs in mainstream schools, which also requires additional funding, all funded from HNB.
- The number of CYP with SEND has increase in Leicester by 9% year on year for the last 2 years. This reflects the national picture. The council has a legal duty to provide support and education for these pupils.
- Government is putting pressure on local authorities to reduce their overspends. TR was interviewed by the Department of Education (DfE) and asked what plans were in place to reduce £6m overspend. TR confirmed all options were being considered.

Q2: Parent noted the closure of such a provision will lead to high rates of pregnancies in CYP.

A2: TR advised that the council understand the families / carers concerns, but no decision has been made at this time.

- Parent: you have failed our children there are hardly any teachers.
- Parent: in a recent City Mayor twitter exchange it was indicated decision has been made.
- Parent: the school failed not to support CYP.

Q3: Have you any experience of disabled CYP, people don't understand the pressures?

A3: TR advised that she is a carer for her brother with a learning disability, so is fully aware of the pressures faced by family / carers.

Q4: You think it's not education, the Residential is education. Why has it been funded for all these years, and now decided it is not education? If you had outstanding mainstream school, you wouldn't be closing such a provision.

A4: TR advised she was not aware of the historical reasons for the creation of the Residential Provision, but the HNB fund was overspent, and the council was looking at all non-statutory items to look at where savings could be made. She also explained that individuals CYP's EHCP should be deliverable within the 25-hour school week, whilst acknowledging the Residential Provision was rated as outstanding by Ofsted and she understood it provided the opportunity for developing friendships and further learning, especially skills around independence. She also explained that no other school had this type of facility funded by the council.

Q5: Are Children and young people not valued?

A5: TR explained that all CYP are valued, but there was limited funding and priority had to be given to education.

Q6: Parents are trying to get residential in section F of EHCP's but being blocked.

A6: TR advised that she was aware of recent requests, but all EHCP's had been checked in Oct 2022 and not included this as a statutory requirement.

Q7: Parent, if the issue is about overspend, the proposal is discriminatory due to other budgets and services.

A7: TR explained that the Council has reducing budgets and will need to cut spending in a number of other areas, full details will be available in the council's budget report, which will be published in Jan 2023.

Q8: Parent, this council need to fight cuts.

A8: TR confirmed the council do regularly fight and challenge budgets.

Q9: CYP need more support and the school is a support to the families. Our CYP can't just go anywhere, as there are no parks and nothing else for them. Also, Mental health is off the scale and more CYP are self-harming. Officers here are going through the motions, what the Mayor said in his twitter, showed he has no respect.

A9: TR advised that all comments will be noted and feedback from the meeting would be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Q10: Parent, what about CYP in the future? Parents frightened for CYP, there are other CYP we need more places, so much revenue for schools and academy.

A10: TR advised that the savings from the proposal would fund more education placements for the increasing number of CYP with SEND. She also explained that the council cannot comment on the academy's decisions, as it's a matter for JE and the governors to decide if they wish to keep the Residential Provision open if a decision is made to withdraw the council funding in 2024.

Statement from parent:

Education for all children and young people is important. The residential provision is totally education. Communication and Interaction, the residential offers a different form of Communication and Interaction with Ash Field pupils can't have that outside of school due to transport, their health and other needs.

For the children and young people Ash Field is their community, they can't access Communication and Interaction as part of EHCP plan, they need more than what is available in school. Ash Field pupils don't get this like other children and young people, also for Cognition and learning, not recognised as strictly, without standing in front of wipe board. Social Emotional and Mental Health is the biggest deal when starting a new school, as well as learning to be independent, setting up for life so not so dependent and knowing who to trust. What happens when our children and young people grow up?

Is this how society looks after the weakest? Sensory and physical, how it happens in residential provision and children and young people want to study academically during the day, therefore wider learning can't just happen during the day.

There is a lack of understanding of what education is for Ash Field CYP, some academic and support for the future, back-up for the future. Need to helpful to be acknowledged.

Q11: If this is removed where will this need be met?

A11: TR explained that the council has a legal duty to provide educational activities as set out in section F of an EHCP. All plans have been checked and whilst a number stated that individual pupils would benefit from residential support, none stated that it 'must' be provided. All EHCP's should be deliverable within a 25-hour school week.

Q12: If the school can't meet need – why would the council look for residential in provision?

A12a: BS, provided some background regarding the history of the residential, it used to be in listed in plans a number of year (two previous heads), always put into EHCPs and funded separately. School had a Residential offer, so all pupils offered, and education place and the school were told by the City council no longer needed to include residential provision in EHCP.

A12b: TR advised that she was not aware of the historical reasons for funding the Residential Provision, but the financial situation was difficult and savings for non-statutory services needed to be considered.

Q13: If the Residential Provision closes, there will be knock on effects for CYP and more cost to the council in the future.

A13: TR explained that in her previous role as Director for Adult Social Care & Commissioning, the need for young people to be supported to gain independence was important, and therefore the council was working with Leicester College to

develop their 16 plus offer to focus on this aspect and to develop internships and employment opportunities.

Statement from parent:

- If the Residential Provision closes CYP will be less independent.
- A number of pupils have life limited conditions, maximum benefits are here at Ash Field education experience all over, can't get it anywhere, can't access due to physical needs, therefore these young people need enhanced life, not live into adulthood.

Q14: Why break it? It's been an outstanding for so many years, why change it, the children and young people don't do well with change.

A14a: TR explained that if a decision is made to withdraw the funding, this will give the school at least 18 months to look at other options for funding the provision. TR also confirmed that there have been some initial discussions with JE and the Governors around possibility of using the Residential Provision for respite / short breaks.

- Ash Field Academy is not respite, its education.

A14b: JE confirmed early conversations had taken place regarding the possibility of using the facility for CYP with complex medical needs or Autism (ASD), but there were concerns about the limited ability to mix cohorts due to the vulnerability of Ash Field pupils. Ash Field is education based and focussed on developing a range of skills. Therefore, at this time the school is not prepared to make a decision to provide respite or short breaks until a decision regarding the funding has been made.

Q15: Could the Council provide details of other funding decision or where services have kept funding?

A15: TR confirmed the funding for Millgate School's residential provision was withdrawn and the Special School Banding and Element 3 Funding for Mainstream Schools has been reviewed.

Additional statements from parents:

- The closure of the Residential Provision could be a breach of the Equalities Act.
- It takes longer for Ash Field children and young people to learn in every sense, the extra time in the residential provision provided the extra input needed for CYP to achieve.
- There needs to level the playing field, which is what the school and residential provision offers, pupils need extra support and specialist support to learn.
- I have 2 children, 1 in mainstream who has access to friends and the community, Ash Field was Community for the other child. The community is not wheelchair friendly, due to medical needs I couldn't ask other parents, the residential provision essential for children to learn with peers without the input from parents, it's a safe environment to learn.

- £400k is a drop in the ocean, especially when the council is spending money on other things such a bike lane's that aren't used and a new market.
- If 5 young people go into crisis without the residential support, it would cost the council £2m for those CYP to go into care. Therefore, it's not a cost savings longer term the funding proposal is a short-term saving.
- Peter Soulsby needs to listen to arguments. There is lots of money going to Children's homes, could the funding not be taken from them?
- knock on effect of families going into crisis, due to complex health needs of the CYP, staff understand and know how to support and manage needs.
- Carers at breaking point in the city.

A16: TR acknowledged the concerns raised by the parents and carers and advised that she would ask the Lead Member (Cllr Elly Cutkelvin) and or the City Mayor to visit the school to listen to the families worries. She also reiterated the council's legal duties towards children in care and council's difficult financial position. She also urged parents and carers to submit any further concerns as part of the formal consultation process. In terms of Equalities this would be taken into consideration as part of the legal review.

Part 3 Pupils

JE introduced the meeting and asked the students to make points and ask questions.

Tracie Rees introduced herself, telling students everything you say to Clare, and I are listening and will make sure your comments, worries about the proposals are noted down. The people making see the details and comments, which include the City Mayor and team making the decision.

Q1: xx stays in resi on Tues, been talking about it. xx communicates through switches. His TA shared a video of xx answering the following questions, which he responds yes to for each one:

- Do you like staying in resi?
- Do you learn new things in resi?
- Is resi important to you and your friends?

A1: Tracie asked if she could receive a copy of the video for the consultation.

Q2: xx gave a speech on his views:

My name is xx, I am a student at Ash Field Academy. I would like to persuade you that we can keep resi open because it teaches kids with disability how to be as independent as they possibly can. Independence is a life skill which is more difficult for children with a disability. Resi isn't like a baby day care centre, you get treated like a normal student like you would in school. Resi teaches students with disabilities how to be independent, look after yourself, cooking and doing your own daily care, such as brushing your teeth on your own. They teach you how to be responsible for yourself. Resi gives you the opportunity to spend time with your friends. It gives your parents break and the children from family. It is a different environment than school. I think it's really beneficial for me and other students because you wouldn't get to communicate with your friends as much as you can in resi.

If resi closed, it would feel like you're losing a part of your family and you would lose your independence. At home, parents automatically do things for you, but in resi, they allow you to try and do it on your own, which means you can build your independence over time.

If you think independence is not educational, than have another think about it because without independence where would you be now? How would you feel if you had a disability and your independence (our resi) was taken away from you? Whether you have a disability or not, independence is for EVERYONE!!

Q3: xx also provided a speech:

My name is xx, I want to speak to you to tell you that the residential part of Ash Field Academy is at serious risk of shutting down, the department is a second home for us in school, you are putting a risk of key and vital skills to learn when they leave school.

Ash Field Academy provide education and support to children and young people between the ages of 4 and 19 years of age, who have complex health and medical needs. All pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Whilst staying in the residential facilities, pupils are involved in various leisure activities and have opportunities to practice their independence skills. Staying in the residential provision and the activities included are free of charge to pupils and parents.

Resi needs to stay open because it gives us freedom and a place to express ourselves, learning independence, social skills and gives us the confidence we need later on in life.

The school has capacity for 160 pupils and currently provides overnight residential provision for up to 18 pupils per night, four nights a week during term time. Annually, 35 – 45 (22-28%) of Ash field Academy's pupils are accessing the residential provision. Many of the pupils accessing the service have profound and multiple disabilities and require specialist care and facilities to support them.

If you take it down then there will be damage done it won't just affect the staff who specifically work there it will be devastating for the families and their kids that go there, there is no other resi, please I'm begging you to re-think and keep this second home of ours open for me it has helped me to become the kind and sensible young man I've become, please re think because we can't afford to lose it, its our pride and joy, it keeps us going.

I truly believe with resi I don't know how I would cope with day-to-day struggle, without support there it would be truly impossible to cope before of my autism personally speaking.

Thank you for listening to my speech.

Q4: xx was unable to attend the meeting, and had provided a statement for a member of staff to read on his behalf:

My name is xx I am a student at Ash field Academy. In my opinion closing resi down will be devastating to everyone stat stays in residential. The staff that work there would lose their jobs.

I like resi, I can chill out and chat with my friends and have a good laugh. It teaches me skills what I didn't have before. Resi is an incredible place to be for so many reasons in my opinion. The resi staff are so devoted to us students to help us learn new skills and to be independent and help other pupils in the future.

I believe it helps parents and families so that they get a break. If resi was to be closed, friends won't be able to socialise or sleep over at others houses. It is not possible for me to sleep or go to a lot of my friends houses because of my equipment (wheelchair, ventilation machine) and care needs, it would be too much for parents and carers. Resi is the only opportunity I have to really socialise for a good period of time with my friends.

I have been lucky enough to go on a few residential trips. This wouldn't be possible with resi. Some families can't afford holidays with their children, rei gives them the opportunity to have holidays.

Please think about what you are doing.

Q5: My name is xx do you have any idea what affect closure of the resi will have on pupils' mental health? It is a vital part of pupils' lives, imagine never going to friends for sleep over? It is a space to socialise to meet needs.

A5: TR advised that the council is aware of the potential impact. The council is aware of concerns raised, by staff told and we talked about the support resi gives, parents also told us about concerns if it wasn't available.

Q6: xx asked, you say that resi isn't education, why? It is a space to practice communication and interacted?

A6: TR explained that the council recognises the Residential Provision is rated as outstanding and also know students rate the facility. The problem is that the local authority doesn't have the money, it comes down to the financial position. We know it has value out of the normal school day, there are big pressures by the council, £400k spend a year for the Residential Provision and there are lots of other CYP with SEND needs we need to make sure we meet needs of other children too, the £400k would provide approximately for 30 places during day for pupils.

Q7: Do you not want children and young people to live independently and prepare for adulthood?

A7: TR advised that this should be a goal for all CYP and reiterated that a decision hasn't been made yet, but the council needs to look at all options to reduce costs.

Q8: Next year I will be moving into own home, I wouldn't be able to do that without all of the support from resi.

A8: TR explained that ideally the council would want to offer all CYP in the City a resi opportunity, but we have over 3,300 pupils with an EHCP and a further 10,000 pupils with SEN needs, but unfortunately the council cannot afford to fund this, and the priority has to be to provide 25 hours of education a week for all CYP. The government is due to give £2 billion for education, which works out at £3m for Leicester, so even if they gave more money, it would help but not cover the gap in the high needs block.

Q9: xx states the resi is educational it helps develops social and independent skills, it's unfair for pupils for the future who need to develop the skills.

A9: TR explained that promoting independence is important but can be taught in the day.

Q10: Why can't you use / help us find other funding?

A10: TR explained that if the decision is made to withdraw the funding in 2024, the council would work with the academy to look at alternative funding opportunities, although it could not guarantee the future funding.

Pupil statements regarding the Residential Provision:

- I have learnt as much from resi as school, wouldn't be able to sit here and join conversation without resi.
- xx, stated the resi holds pupils together as a second family, keeps motivated, helps with emotional needs to cope.
- xx, stated he can see friends more often when in the resi and see staff.
- xx, stated we've a got future and friendships that the resi offers, things need to be done in school different.
- xx don't know what feel – we wouldn't live without resi – really annoyed, without staff, you can't take away from us – really annoyed – it's our home, taking away our independence you have no idea how this feel.
- xx it's breaking us quite hard, we have a say, when we found out it was hard, becomes more difficult to think about.
- The resi makes you feel happy and independent.
- xx, stated that being in the resi has provided me with life skills like cooking, making a cup of tea, I won't be independent as I am now, I have the confidence and do these things, it is educational.
- xx shared he liked being with friends it makes him happy, also achieved also with personal needs.
- xx finds the resi really fun.
- Going to cost lots of money if the resi closed, with redundancy pay. We have spoken a lot education side, if resi is great place, staff is amazing, advice and support, been a lot over the last year, won't be as mentally well. I have made decision to stay as school for an extra year, help with dealing with my own house, I would only be able to do this with resi.
- xx is leaving Ash Field this year, and has enjoyed the resi, it has helped with life skills and dealing with other people, learnt lots and it would be sad to see it go.
- xx states when you walk into resi, it is joyful and jolly, feel calm, safe and at home like your proper home. Staff are all happy, get to chill out and express how you feel it is a heart-warming place to be. If you're new person, you know you are in safe hands.

TR thanked all the students for their comments and assured the group these would be passed on to the Lead Member (Cllr Elly Cutkelvin) the City Mayor and Executive to consider as part of the decision-making process. TR also explained that further comments could be fed back through JE if needed.