

# Agenda Item 44

**TITLE** High Needs Block & SEND IIP Update

**FOR CONSIDERATION BY** Schools Forum on 6 July 2022

**WARD** None Specific;

**LEAD OFFICER** Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

This reports forms part of regular reporting to Schools Forum, informing areas of statutory decision making and improving visibility and consultation on wider Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) financial matters

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Schools Forum is asked to note the update on key programme actions and the Safety Valve Programme.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report provides Schools Forum with an update on the High Needs Block, SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme and associated deficit management plan.

### Update on the High Needs Block & SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme

#### .01 Purpose of the Report

To provide Schools Forum with an update on the High Needs Block, SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme and deficit management plan.

#### .02 Recommendation

Schools Forum is asked to note the update.

#### .03 Background

As with many other local authorities, Wokingham continues to face significant challenges in balancing available High Needs Block resources with meeting the needs of local children and young people with SEN.

An in-year deficit of £4.5m is forecast for the 2022/23 financial year, with a cumulative deficit of £14.5m forecast by the end of March 2023.

Under the governance of the SEND Innovation & Improvement Programme the local authority seeks to work in partnership with schools, families and a range of stakeholders to identify and deliver a sustainable approach to SEND within the borough.

This report provides an update on the significant programme of work ongoing, the focus of the SEND Improvement Board over the coming months, and Wokingham's participation in the Department for Education's Safety Valve Programme from September 2022.

#### .04 Update on Key Programme Actions

##### Transitions

We are continuing to deliver against the Accelerated Progress Plan in respect of the ongoing weakness identified in the SEND Revisit, in terms of the lack of a developed pathway to enable young people with SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood

An action plan of 6 key areas of improvement has been developed with the following key actions:

- Strengthen governance and performance management of transitions for all children and young people with SEND in Wokingham.

- Informed by the outcomes from Action 1 above, establish a clear protocol / policy within WBC that defines transitions and the respective roles of professionals including (but not limited to) Children's Services and Adult Social Care
- Complete coproduced Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Pathway documentation and guidance for parents, carers and professionals, which articulates the engagement, roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders/partners at each stage of transition to adulthood
- To improve transition arrangements through RBFT provision
- To continue to increase the number of people aged 14+ who are on GP Learning Disability registers and access an LD Health Check
- Fully utilise NEET/EET & Sept. Guarantee data

Work is progressing under each of these areas, with some areas now completed. We are currently bringing together a range of evidence to support the sharing of impact of the APP.

We continue to work closely with our DfE SEND Advisor, and have our next APP review meeting with the DfE and CQC colleagues scheduled for the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

### **Children and Young People's Integrated Therapy (CYPIT)**

The Council commissions Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy for Children and Young People with an Education Care and Health Plan (EHCP) where therapy has been identified in the Education section of the plan (Section F).

The commissioned service (CYPIT) is currently provided by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BHfT), under a contract which runs to 31 August 2022.

Formal approval was secured to source a provider for these services across Berkshire West, in collaboration with Brighter Futures for Children, Reading and West Berkshire District Council. The subsequent procurement has been led by Wokingham, and tender responses submitted are being evaluated.

The Council will be seeking formal approval to extend the current Wokingham CYPIT contract for a further seven months from 1 September 2022 to 31 March 2023 on current terms and conditions; to accommodate additional time required to complete evaluation and contract mobilisation. Extension of the Wokingham CYPIT contract until the 31 March 2023, will ensure continuity and sustainability of current service provision and the continued delivery of statutory services for the duration of procurement, with a new single CYPIT contract across Berkshire West commencing on the 1 April 2023.

### **Foundry Review**

Review approach in partnership with Foundry College has been progressing well with stage 1 now completed. Through the IIP, with support from commissioning and Foundry a one-year SLA will be in place by early summer. This will then further develop into a new SLA with ongoing work to develop a five-year strategic plan and budget setting around need based on the four key deliverables.

Permanently Excluded, Medically Vulnerable, Alternative Provision, and Outreach.

During the 2021/22, potential funding of £400k has been identified within the High Needs Block to support potential financial activity that may come out of the review and support Foundry on projects of a significant in-year deficit. No funding was drawn down as the actual financial position improved on the school's initial projections. Foundry has set a balanced budget for the 2022/23 financial year, with discussions ongoing around longer term financial planning.

### **Local Provision Planning**

We are currently exploring a range of solutions to address the increasing demand for Local SEND provision.

<b>Solution</b>	<b>Narrative</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>New Special School – SLD / ASD</b>	100 places all through school to cater for similar cohort to Addington	Cost saving on placement and OOB pressures, reduction on transport costs
<b>New Special School – SEMH</b>	75 place special school to cater for children with a specific primary need of SEMH	Cost saving on placement and OOB pressures, reduction on transport costs
<b>Early Years – Early Intervention</b>	Increase specialist intervention for EY settings	Increased management of need at an early stage to reduce cost rises based on non-early intervention
<b>Increased Post 16 Provision</b>	Development of an offer locally to respond to our post 16 SEND needs providing significant improvement on current offering	Better provision at post 16 reduction in cost per pupil and transport
<b>Resource Base Provision</b>	Re-configuring of offering	Better suited provisions (to meet need trends), for pupils at this stage, improved cost implications, reduction in escalation to special school ahead of need
<b>SEND Support Service</b>	Increased specialist intervention for Schools around K code and Ordinarily Available Provision	Increased management of need at an early stage to reduce cost rises based on non-early intervention

### **.05 Safety Valve Programme**

In 2020/21, the Department for Education introduced the 'safety valve' intervention programme for those local authorities with the very highest percentage DSG deficits, recognising that help would be needed for these authorities to turn things around in a short space of time.

The programme required those local authorities to develop substantial plans for reform to their high needs systems and associated spending, with support and challenge from the department, to rapidly place them on a sustainable footing.

Wokingham is due to take part in the 'safety valve' intervention programme from September 2022.

Delivery of the programme to date has focussed on two principal goals, viewed as critical for local authorities' to reach financial sustainability:

- appropriately managing demand for EHCPs, including assessment processes that are fit for purpose;
- use of appropriate and cost-effective provision. This includes ensuring mainstream schools are equipped and encouraged to meet needs where possible, whilst maintaining high standards for all pupils.

Learning from previous safety valve interventions challenges across 5 key headings in meeting the above goals:

- Early Intervention Focus
- Increased SEN Support Offer
- Review EHCP assessment process and thresholds
- Culture change and work with school leaders
- Appropriate and thorough provision mapping, with potential development of more local provision

In preparation for the programme starting in September work will continue to refresh the local DSG Management Plan, assessing local circumstances and progress through the SEND IIP against the goals and key areas above.

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