

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme (SEND IIP) Update</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 September 2022
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Children's Services - Helen Watson

**OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Provide Members with an overview of progress with delivery of the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme (SEND IIP)

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Members of the Committee:

- **Note and discuss** progress with the delivery of the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme

**SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Purpose of the SEND IIP is to deliver the local area SEND Strategy 0-25 (2021-24).

The Strategy is a local area, partnership strategy. Multi-agency members of the SEND Innovation and Improvement Board (SEND IIP) play a leading role in ensuring the goals and objectives of the SEND Strategy are successfully achieved.

The work of the SEND IIP is coproduced with key stakeholders across the local area, including strategic partners across education, health, social care, and the voluntary, community and charity sector, and parents and carers of children and young people with SEND.

The SEND IIP:

- Focuses on delivering the four strategic priorities set out in the SEND Strategy, and key actions to achieve the vision of improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families;
- Takes a strategic multiagency approach to successfully addressing complex challenges such as the need to improve outcomes in the context of significant increases in demands, and sustained pressures on the financial and staffing resources available to local public services in Wokingham;
- Responds directly to key requirements set out in inspections and performance reviews by Ofsted, CQC and DfE
- Drives an ambitious programme of delivery over the coming years, which will improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the Borough; help deliver on the Council's commitments to deliver excellence for all children, young people and families in Wokingham, and help to strengthen the sustainability and viability of SEND services in the coming years.

The SEND IIP meets quarterly to review the progress made by its four Working Groups, which meet monthly to drive on-the-ground improvements to services and support for children and young people with SEND.

## Background

As a Council we want to make sure we deliver excellent services for children and young people with SEND and their families, enabling them to access the support they need to achieve the best possible outcomes. The Council understands that needs and the types of support required to address them differ considerably from one child or young person to another, so its Strategy for children and young people must address a broad range of challenges and be comprehensive enough to ensure all children and young people with SEND receive the right type and level of support at the right time.

The SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme (SEND IIP) was established to deliver the SEND Strategy 0-25 (2021-24). The aspiration set out the SEND Strategy 0-25 is that Wokingham is a great place for children and young people with SEND to grow up. There are already several good services and support locally for children and young people with SEND in Wokingham and their families. There is a good range of public and privately funded resources for Wokingham children and young people with SEND. Parents and Carers of children and young people with SEND in Wokingham benefit from an extremely active and engaged Parent Carer Forum, as well as advocacy, advice and support from outstanding independent, voluntary, community and charity sector organisations.

However, like many local areas, Wokingham faces several challenges which need to be addressed in the coming years in order to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND – and the SEND IIP aims to address these.

For example, the needs of children and young people are changing and increasing in the context of sustained pressures on public finances. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is already being felt significantly in terms of additional pressures on funding for local public services and dramatic shifts in the way that services are provided, which present further challenges for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Over the years, pressures on funding for SEND support have increased significantly. Increases in demand and the challenges of meeting needs locally has driven increases in placements for children and young people outside Wokingham, which has put additional pressure on available funding. Although investments have been made in strengthening local provision (including expansion of Special provision in the Borough) and further investments are set to follow in the coming years, costs of placements in the Independent and Non-Maintained Sector and with travel assistance for children and young people with SEND accessing education out of borough are significant and unsustainable at their current rate. Trend data show that the demand for SEND support in Wokingham is increasing. Over the last few years there has been a significant upward trend in the numbers of children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and numbers of children and young people requiring SEN support in schools.

There have been notable increases in demand for support in relation to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) in particular.

The numbers of younger children (aged 7-11) requiring some form of SEN support has increased significantly over the last three years, partly as a result of changing demographics and needs, and partly as a result of better assessments and more successful early identification and prevention. Strategic partners across Wokingham are committed to putting better outcomes for children and young people with SEND at the

heart of everything they do; they work collaboratively through the SEND IIP to achieve this.

The SEND IIP is also designed to continue to strengthen coproduction and engagement with families. The SEND IIP has a specific workstream focused on coproduction, and each of the 4 Working Groups has representatives from parents and carers via the Wokingham Parent Carer Forum (SEND Voices Wokingham).

The SEND IIP is also focused not just on improving SEND services and outcomes, but also on addressing the financial challenges that arise mainly from demand increasing at a significantly faster pace than supply of support and services and available resources. Working Group 4 (described further below) seeks to address these complex challenges through effective resource and performance management, and evidence-based commissioning.

### *Future challenges and horizon scanning*

As the SEND IIP continues to deliver, it is increasingly looking ahead to future challenges, and provides a platform for strategic decision-making about how to address complex issues on the horizon – for example, the implications of the recent government Green Paper on SEND (Right Help, Right Place, Right Time) – which amongst other things calls for SEND Boards to be established in all areas to drive improvements in the SEND system; and the Education White Paper which has significant implications for Education provision, including provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. In addition, a new inspection and regulatory framework for SEND is expected to be implemented soon; the SEND IIP will be a crucial space for working through the implications of this and ensuring an efficient and effective response to new inspection requirements is in place.

## **Analysis of Issues**

The SEND IIP aims to successfully address the key challenges and issues in relation to SEND identified above.

Levels of demand for support in relation to SEND have increased significantly over the past three years. The number of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Wokingham has risen significantly in recent years. While the main driver of this relates to the extension of duties brought about by the Children & Families Act 2014, this comes at a time when the local population is also on the increase. Data underpinning the SEND Strategy 0-25 indicates that funded EHCPs increased by 8%, whilst the local population has grown by an estimated 4%. On the basis of this trajectory, it is predicted that over the coming years the number of children and young people with EHCPs is likely to increase significantly, as is the proportion of the school population with an EHCP.

Needs have continued to grow in relation to certain types of SEND and SEND-related issues, in particular Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), certain types of Learning Disability (LD) and needs in relation to Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH). Practitioners also report that complexity of need is also increasing, as an increasing number of children and young people may require multiple types of support relating to several different types of need. Demand for SEND support in mainstream educational settings below the thresholds required for EHCPs has also grown substantially over the past three years, particularly in relation to SEMH.

### *SEND IIP addressing issues identified through inspections and formal progress reviews*

The Spring 2019 joint inspection of Wokingham's local area approach to support for children and young people with SEND found that although there were some key areas of strength in terms of service planning and delivery, there were several areas for improvement, including:

1. Wokingham needs a clearly communicated and co-produced SEND Strategy and accompanying action plan, which are shared and understood across education, health and care, and which are focused on improving the outcomes of children and young people with SEND.
2. The timeliness and quality of EHCPs needs to improve
3. Co-production at the strategic level to inform effective co-production at all other levels is lacking and needs focused development
4. The quality of management information to inform accurate evaluation and energise service improvement needs to improve
5. Joint working and joined up thinking and delivery between professionals across education, health and social care needs to be strengthened
6. Successful transitions to adulthood also requires focused improvement in Wokingham.

The SEND IIP drove significant performance improvement in each of these areas, and in an inspection Revisit in Spring 2021, inspectors determined that sufficient progress had been made in 5 of the 6 areas set out in the Written Statement of Action. In one area – transitions to adulthood – Wokingham Borough was asked to prepare a separate “Accelerated Progress Plan” (APP) to drive multiagency work to improve transitions outcomes for all children and young people with SEND.

A recent formal review of the SEND IIP's progress with improving transitions support and outcomes found that good progress had been made across all areas of the APP, however further progress is required in order to demonstrate the impact on outcomes for children and young people arising from the improvements made over the past six months; engagement with mainstream education needs to be strengthened and clarified; and members of the SEND IIP need to continue to focus on improving transitions for all children and young people with SEND, not just those making transition from children's to adult social care. The next formal review of progress against the APP relating to transitions will be in January 2023.

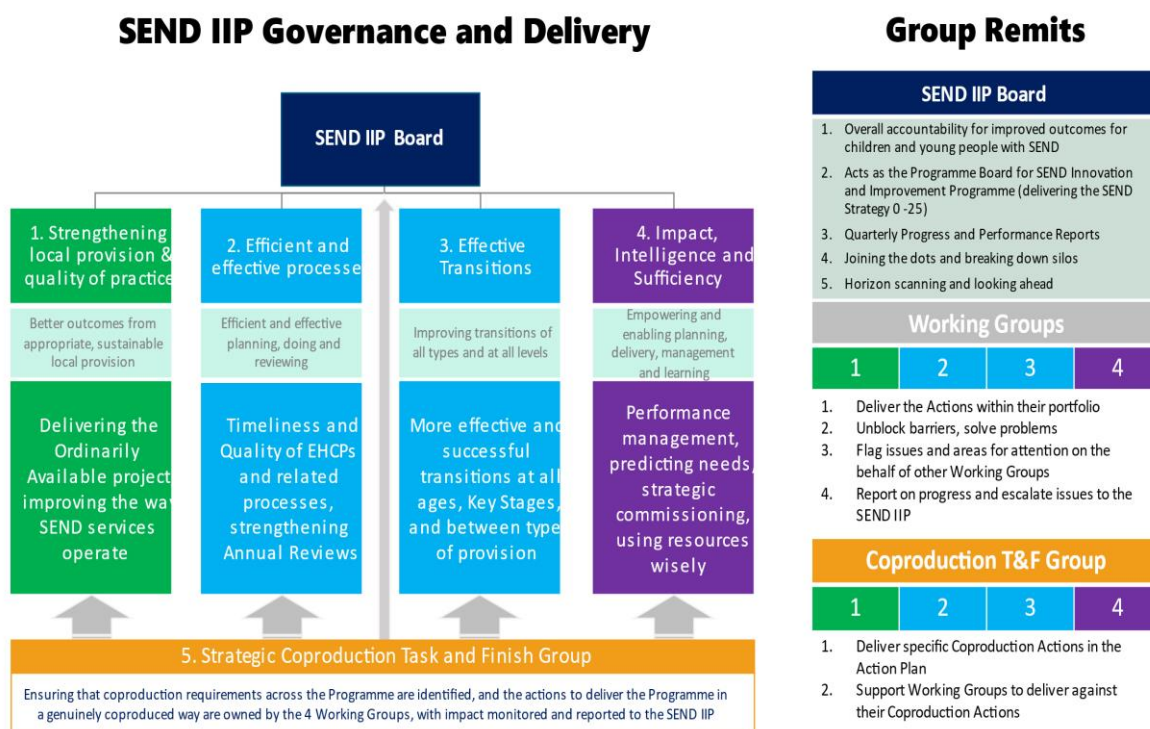
### *Financial challenges*

Several complex financial challenges arising from the increases in and changing nature of demand for support for children and young people with SEND. These are explored in greater detail in the “Financial Implications” Section of this report.

### *SEND IIP Working Groups*

The SEND IIP delivers the goals and aims of the SEND Strategy through Four Working Groups, which mirror the Priorities set out in the SEND Strategy. These Groups are supported by the Coproduction Task and Finish Group. These arrangements are set out in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Governance Arrangements for SEND IIP



**Working Group 1 (delivering Priority 1): Build local provision to better meet local needs.**

- Improving the sufficiency and consistency of local SEND provision
- Defining consistent universal offer and “ordinarily available” provision in education settings
- Establishing the future direction and strategy for inclusion and support offer in mainstream settings
- Improving the value for money (effectiveness and cost) of resource base provision
- Defining the future direction and strategy for in-borough special provision
- Focusing on gaps / issues of concern to parents, carers, children and young people: e.g. mental health and transport services

**Working Group 2 (delivering Priority 2): Delivered through an efficient, effective and well-managed system**

- Strengthening “transitions” of all types – into adulthood, between mainstream and special, between school years, “managed moves”
- Embed a consistent graduated approach across Wokingham
- Early intervention, prevention and forward planning is embedded in assessment and decision making
- Strengthening the timeliness, quality and effectiveness of assessments to reflect the points above
- Make it easier for parents and carers to engage with services

### **Working Group 3 (delivering Priority 3): Real coproduction embedded at all levels of planning and delivery**

- Drive meaningful coproduction at a strategic and individual level
- Strengthen genuine partnership between professionals, children, young people, parents and carers in the way services are planned, delivered and reviewed
- Effective implementation of the SEND Coproduction Charter, with systematic reviews to ensure change is happening on the ground
- Consistently effective approaches to evaluation and management of service user feedback

### **Working Group 4 (delivering Priority 4): Enabled through intelligence and strategic commissioning**

- Strengthen quality and use of data and evidence-led planning
- Develop a single shared view of local needs across the area
- Genuinely strategic joint commissioning
- Early intervention and prevention central to commissioning
- Strengthen the focus on outcomes / impact on people's lives in performance management, and management of implementation of the SEND Strategy

#### *Managing Delivery: Highlight Reports on Progress*

Working Groups meet monthly to drive delivery against the key actions for which they are responsible. Highlight reports are presented to the SEND IIP Board, which meets quarterly to:

- Discuss progress since last meeting, and priorities for the forthcoming meeting
- Discuss key issues arising which require multi-agency discussion and agreement
- Take key decisions relating to improvements for services and support for children and young people with SEND
- Manage risks associated with delivery of the programme
- Horizon scan and look ahead to any challenges and upcoming issues relating to SEND which Wokingham needs to tackle as a local area

**In order to provide Members with additional detail of key activities currently prioritised by the SEND IIP, and additional detail on the focus of each of the key Working Groups in most recent months and the coming period, APPENDIX 1 provides the most recent pack of Highlight Reports reviewed at the July meeting of the SEND IIP.**

#### *Managing Delivery: Refreshed SEND Dashboard (currently in development)*

In addition to comprehensive Highlight Reports to the SEND IIP on a quarterly basis, Working Group 4 is currently updating and developing a comprehensive SEND Dashboard to demonstrate the impact of the SEND IIP's work on Key Performance Indicators and Outcome Measures.

To note, Outcome Measures are one of several key sets of information to enable stakeholders across the local area, and service users, to monitor impact on outcomes arising from SEND IIP delivery. Outcome Measures have been discussed previously with key stakeholders with support from the Council for Disabled Children (CDC). Those

discussed to date are based around “I Statements”, with clearly measurable indicators attached to each statement. The “I Statements” are:

1. I am physically and mentally as healthy as I can be
2. I am happy
3. I feel supported
4. I feel safe
5. I am included and active in my local community
6. I am hopeful for the future
7. I am as independent as I can be
8. My family and/or the people who care for me are supported.

Feedback received from stakeholders during the consultation period and at the time of writing indicates that whilst the success measures included in the SEND Strategy should include some Outcome Measures, these are not necessarily appropriate for *all* children and young people with SEND (e.g. very young children, children and young people who do not communicate verbally), and on their own are not necessarily sufficient to measure and assess the impact of the SEND IIP. For these reasons success measures in the final SEND Dashboard will include a refreshed set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used to measure delivery against statutory requirements and service standards (e.g. performance measures related to the timeliness and quality of EHCP assessments; complaints received and numbers of tribunals).

Once the Dashboard has been completed and signed off by the SEND IIP, performance against KPIs and Outcome Measures will be monitored and reviewed by Working Group 4 and then reported to the SEND IIP on a quarterly basis.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- **Note and discuss** progress with the delivery of the SEND Innovation and Improvement Programme

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	n/a	n/a	n/a

### **Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision**

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

However, there are several financial challenges arising from the increases in and changing nature of demand for support for children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers. In summary the challenges arise from issues which affect Wokingham, but which are common to local areas across the country include:

- a) Sustained pressures on the High Needs Block funding available to the Council to address the growing and changing demands for SEND services and support
- b) Sustained pressures on local public service partners' budgets and resources to address local challenges in relation to SEND
- c) Challenges around sufficiency of local SEND provision to meet growing levels of demand, driving the use of out of borough and Independent Non-Maintained Sector provision, particularly in relation to special provision and post-16 provision
- d) Market and cost management challenges relating to costs of provision particularly in terms of Independent and Non-Maintained Sector provision and some inflationary pressures
- e) Complexity of joint strategic commissioning and a complex commissioner and provider landscape; challenges around aligning numerous strategic priorities driving commissioning across the Wokingham and Berkshire West area

In the Summer of 2019 Wokingham was one of 32 local authorities required to submit a deficit management plan to DfE in relation to High Needs Block (HNB) funding. Challenges around developing and delivering this plan include significant increases in demand and rising costs for local settings.

The current forecast in-year deficit for the HNB is £4.3m, which represents 17% of available funding for the year. The cumulative DSG deficit projected to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 is currently £14.5m. Costs and activity are regularly reviewed to ensure that any immediate and short-term opportunities to reduce budget pressure are explored.

However, in terms of ensuring longer term financial viability, the SEND IIP has a key role to play in addressing challenges around the resources available to deliver and improve SEND Services in Wokingham. The SEND IIP will play a vital role in helping to address pressures on HNB funding and other financial resources required to deliver the actions and commitments set out in the Strategy.

Some key actions included in the SEND IIP's work programme which will help to achieve this include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1. More effective demand modelling and forecasting, to ensure the best possible services are in place to help manage demand in coming years
- 2. More effective activity and financial reporting, as a result of better systems and information management, and closer joint working between the Children's Services Finance Team and SEND professionals
- 3. More effective joint commissioning with other agencies including Health partners (e.g. in relation to a range of Integrated Therapies for children and young people such as speech and language, physiotherapy, occupational therapy), and taking advantage of efficiencies and economies of scale from commissioning some SEND services in partnership with other agencies and/or neighbouring local areas - where there is a clear value for money benefit to Wokingham residents



4. Several actions relating to a substantial review of the use of the Independent and Non-Maintained Sector, to reduce dependency on out of borough provision and ensure the best possible value for money is delivered through use of independent and non-maintained provision
5. Implementation of the “Ordinarily Available” project in Wokingham, designed to ensure a common standard of SEND support provision is available across Wokingham schools, and that a greater proportion of Wokingham children and young people with SEND needs have their needs met within local, mainstream education
6. A substantial review of Resource Base provision to ensure a viable financial model is in place to deliver the right SEND support locally to help ensure that SEND needs are met as far as possible in-borough and within mainstream education (this work is aligned with the “Ordinarily Available” project summarised above)
7. The focus in the Strategy on building local provision will also help to drive reductions in the costs of Home to School Transport and Travel Assistance associated with transportation of children and young people with SEND out of borough to access appropriate education placements
8. Review of key funding models used by the local authority to ensure sustainable funding models are in place for key SEND services in the coming years – e.g. a review of the Foundry funding Model, to help strengthen outreach provision, provision for post-16 pupils who require ongoing support, provision for re-engagement of children missing from education, and some specialist provision for primary pupils with SEMH and secondary pupils with ASD, and exploration of the development of on-site Alternative Provision for KS4 pupils in vocational and work-related learning
9. Improvements in local special provision – for example in relation to the new DfE-funded Free School at Winnersh Farm for children with Autism which will serve Reading and Wokingham, which will offer an additional 75 places to Wokingham children and young people

Delivery of a comprehensive SEND Sufficiency project, involving a comparison of a comprehensive assessment of current and forecast needs with an assessment of currently available provision, for the purposes of identifying gaps and areas to be addressed in the coming years; development of a clear viable funding model designed to ensure that needs are addressed and demand is managed within available resources.

### **Cross-Council Implications**

The aims, objectives and work programme within the SEND IIP have significant implications for a range of services within Children’s Services, in particular Education and Social Care. In terms of the impact of the SEND IIP on other Council Departments, objectives around provision of information, advice and guidance for families; coproduction with Parent Carers; and communication and engagement with families on SEND-related issues, these all have implications for the Council’s communications functions, and members of the communications teams have been engaged in the process of promoting the work of the SEND IIP and specific projects within its remit. Issues such as Home to School Transport (HST) for children and young people with SEND also require engagement and joint working between Children’s Services, Corporate functions such as Finance, and Place and Growth. Although work relating to HST is governed separately from the SEND IIP, stakeholders within the SEND IIP are closely connected with this work and outcomes from discussions within the SEND IIP will help steer and inform some aspects of the work on HST moving forward. Large-

scale commissioning activities within the SEND IIP portfolio, such as strategic development of in-borough SEND provision, have implications for the Council's capital programme, and require effective joint working between SEND IIP stakeholders and colleagues from Place and Growth. In all cases where the SEND IIP's programme impacts on other Council Departments and services, engagement takes place outside and around SEND IIP meetings to ensure appropriate joint working and information sharing is in place.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

There are no recommendations for decisions arising from this report, so there are no direct Equality Impacts arising. However, to note, an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the SEND Strategy 0-25, which is now delivered by the SEND IIP.

Outcomes from this Equality Impact Assessment are summarised in the points below. Some of the Equality issues raised in the initial EIA have been used to guide discussion and strategic decision-making in SEND IIP meetings, including:

- The clear potential for the Strategy to impact on groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (including children and young people aged 0-25 with disabilities)
- The potential for positive differential impacts on the lives of children and young people 0-25 with disability which would arise from successful delivery of the priorities and key actions set out within the Strategy
- Outcomes from the Needs Analysis included within the SEND Strategy indicate that the needs of specific cohorts of children and young people with SEND in Wokingham require particular attention and action; commitments in Priority 1 of the Strategy are designed in part to ensure these needs are met as far as possible through local provision; commitments in Priority 4 of the Strategy are designed to ensure this is delivered in an equitable and financially viable way
- Commitments in the Strategy to coproduction in design and delivery of services for children and young people with SEND are designed to ensure that the SEND Strategy has a positive impact on outcomes for some of the most vulnerable groups within the borough; governance and performance management arrangements are designed to help ensure that those commissioning and delivering services for children and young people with SEND are aware of the impact on outcomes, and are able to take the actions needed to ensure the Strategy achieves its vision for improved outcomes.

Any key decisions proposed by the SEND IIP which require Member approval will be presented with the appropriate Equality Impact Assessment.

### ***Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030***

Priority 1 within the SEND Strategy (delivered by SEND IIP Working Group 1) focuses on building better local SEND provision. Achievement of this objective would reduce the demand for out-of-borough placements, and the transport provision associated with this. In the main the transport the Council provides is in the form of motor vehicles: reducing demand for Home to School Transport and Travel Assistance is therefore likely to reduce motor vehicle emissions, and contribute to the Council's commitment to address the Climate Emergency.

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
Appendix 1: Highlight Reports from July 2022 SEND IIP

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