

Schools Forum

29th September 2022

SEND & Inclusion Change Programme

Recommendations

- That the Forum comments upon progress of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report provides an update on activity on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) & Inclusion Change Programme since the previous report to School Forum and in particular an update on the long-term financial forecast.

2. SEND & Inclusion Change Programme

- 2.1 The vision for SEND in Warwickshire is that all our children and young people lead a fulfilling life and are part of their community.
- 2.2 Through the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme we will work together to:
- Improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND
 - Take decisions in a clear, fair and transparent way
 - Ensure that systems are sustainable, so that we are working within our allocated funding
 - Secure education, employment and training for our young people with SEND (age 16-25)
- 2.3 The programme itself is funded by Warwickshire County Council. Funding to continue the programme into 2022/23 has been agreed through the Council budget process.

3. Consultation and case studies

- 3.1 As noted at the June meeting, the Council intend to go out to consultation this term on transferring up to 0.5% of the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.
- 3.2 At the September meeting, the SEND & Inclusion team will describe two case studies to illustrate the needs of children and young people, practice and decision-making process that continues to put financial pressure on the local system.

4. Summary update on Programme and Projects

4.1 The project approach adopted by Warwickshire County Council is:

- a) Project to have initial approval of a Project Proposal Document (PPD)
- b) A full business case (FBC) is then developed including mapping of the 'as-is' position and 'to-be' position, along with the plan to move from one to the other and confirmation of the benefits
- c) Projects go live for implementation
- d) Project closed and lessons learnt report

4.2 Projects were separated into three phases. Phase 2 projects are now underway. The overall status report is below:

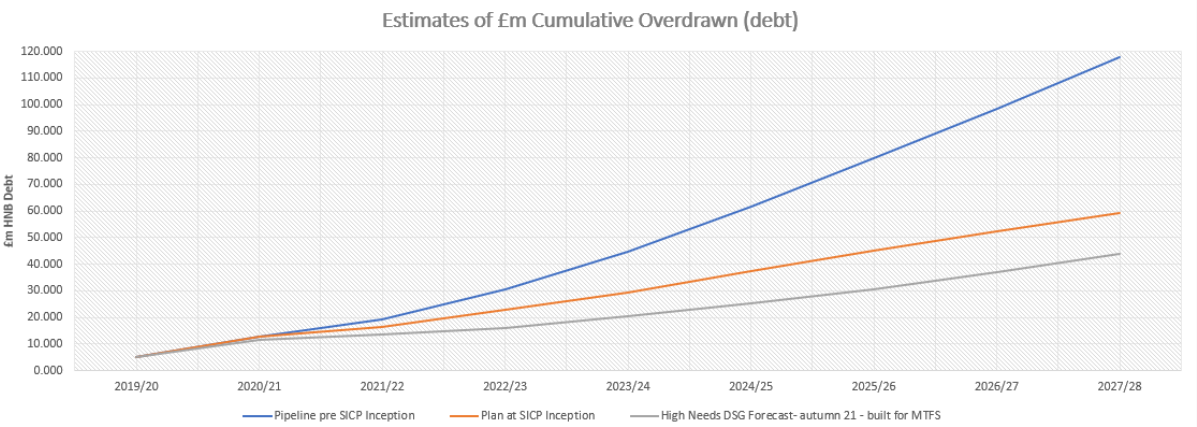
OCT 20	NOV 20	DEC 20	JAN 21	FEB 21	MAR 21	APR 21	MAY 21	JUNE 21	JULY 21	Aug 21	Sept 21	Oct 21	Nov 2021	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22	Mar 22	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22
Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
				Compromised	At risk of compromise	On Target	Transferred	Completed	Paused	Total													
PPD																			2				2
FBC				1				4		1													6
LIVE				1						3													4
Closed															9								9
Transferred													2										2
Total				2				4		4			2		9				2				23

4.3 The following projects are highlighted:

- a) The Warwickshire Academy (a new special school) is now fully open with year groups 5,6,7 and 8.
- b) The SEND Capital Strategy project is in place recommending further resourced provision and expansion of special schools in areas of population growth. Two new resourced provisions have been approved for opening in the Autumn term (one primary, one secondary).
- c) The Inclusion Framework trial, seeking to intervene earlier and avoid barriers created through traded services, is underway with 20 schools taking part.
- d) The Workforce Development project has transferred to the Written Statement of Action workstream.
- e) The EHC Plan Annual Reviews, Transitions Guidance and Resolving Disagreement projects are now underway.
- f) The Schools Top-Up Funding project is progressing to the next stage of issuing new EHC plans with new levels of funding, subject to a final check of the banding levels.

5. Overall financial impact so far

- 5.1 The information below was also shared in June.
- 5.2 Quality and performance measures are reported to the SEND Partnership and the SEND & inclusion Change Programme Board. This report focuses on financial impact under the objective to achieve financial sustainability.
- 5.3 High Needs Block outturn overspent by £2.130m in 2021/22. This was less than the forecast £11.352m forecast at the inception of SEND Change Programme and indeed less than 2020/21 (Outturn £8.610m). However, it is still an overspend and significant financial pressure remains in this area. The detail on areas of overspend against budget is set out in the DSG monitoring report.
- 5.4 Being precise on cause and effect remains a barrier until all financial information is stored in the Synergy system alongside activity and profile data. Additional funding through the High Needs Block and the 0.5% transfer from the Schools Block have clearly been significant factors, along with the Change Programme, in reducing spend against the forecast.
- 5.5 In light of the latest figures, the high level cumulative overspend forecast has been updated. This is demonstrated in the graph below. The blue line represents the cumulative overspend forecast in May 2020 had there been no intervention. The orange line shows the predicted overspend based upon SEND & Inclusion Change Programme interventions, again set at May 2020. The grey line shows the latest forecast.



5.6 The latest forecast shows that a better outlook compared to May 2020, although still a cumulative overspend of over £40m by 2027/28.

5.7 Based on latest data available, there remains a clear direction of travel on key factors affecting spend:

- a) **More children and young people with SEND are being supported in mainstream settings.** 1,571 children were supported in mainstream settings in January 2022 compared to 1,430 the year before. This is also higher than the 2017 level (1,475) and higher than the number placed in state-funded special schools. New guidance to schools on the graduated approach was launched in October 2021.
- b) **More children are supported in state-funded specialist settings.** This was expected due to population growth, increased complexity of need and less use of independent specialist provision (ISP). 1,563 children are supported in state-funded specialist setting in January 2022 compared to 1,544 in 2021.
- c) **The numbers of children and young people attending independent specialist provision (ISP) has reduced slightly** from 253 in January 2021 to 250 in January 2022. Comparative benchmarking for 2022 shows that Warwickshire is now in line with the national average at 5.2% and below statistical neighbours (5.3%). Warwickshire was at 10.6% in 2015. It has been Warwickshire's aim to reduce the proportion of learners in ISP to be in line with national levels. This has been achieved in 2022. However, there is concern that since January, this number has increased again with 262 children and young people attending ISP in September 2022.
- d) **The number of children attending specialist resourced provision is increasing.** Two new resourced provisions have opened in September 2022. The County now has 18 resourced provisions and partnerships since 2015, creating 160 places across the County. Utilisation is up to 120. These provisions allow for specialist provision in mainstream settings delivering positive outcomes, value for money and freeing up places in specialist settings.
- e) **The number of new EHC plans issued has reduced.** The number of new EHC plans issued in the calendar year 2021 was 492 compared with 583 the previous year. This trend is contrary to national and statistical neighbours. However, the number of requests has gone up from 734 January-August 2021 to 911 January August 2022.
- f) **The number of EHC plans in pre-school years is increasing.** The project is working to identify the appropriate time for requesting a EHC needs assessment in early years as a form of early intervention. In February 2022, 14 children had an EHC plan issued prior to school age. At present, 18 children prior to school age have an EHC plan issued, with a further 42 EHC plans expected to be in place by February 2022.
- g) **The unit price of residential placements has reduced but the number of placements has increased.**

- h) **New cost centres have been created to monitor spend on alternative provision.**
This allows for better monitoring of spend in this area from April 2021. New guidance has been developed limiting the use of alternative provision to 10 weeks. Costs in this area have significantly reduced.
- i) **The number of supported internships has significantly reduced as a result of Covid-19 to 26 in 2021/22.** This has had a significant impact on the financial forecast.

6. Other pressures on the High Needs Block

- 6.1 Special schools have not received additional funding that mainstream schools have received through the Schools Supplementary Grant. Applying the same formula that mainstream schools have received additional funding for would add approximately £688k to the current forecast. The SEND & Inclusion Change Programme Board is still considering this proposal. A further £578k has been allocated to special schools for the Teachers' Pension Employee Contribution Grant (TPECG) - again mainstream schools has received this funding from a separate source.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 That the Forum comments upon progress of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme

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