

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

SEND & Inclusion Change Programme

26 October 2020

Recommendation

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the report.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The report provides an update on activity on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) & Inclusion Change Programme since previous reports to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during June and July 2020

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 In June and July 2020, Cabinet approved the establishment of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme to bring about required change to delivering statutory duties within allocated resources. There are 31 projects that underpin for the delivery of SEND transformation, financial recovery and sustainability, and the continuation of statutory duties.
- 2.3 We know that things need to change because, as outlined in previous reports, outcomes for our children and young people with SEND have been getting worse and we are spending well above our allocated budget. Warwickshire needs to introduce a whole system change.
- 2.4 We must focus on 'promoting inclusion' in mainstream settings, giving schools the skills and resources to meet the needs of learners in their local schools, and building the confidence of parents and carers. 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
- 2.5 Children and young people with SEND are our children. We want to change the conversation in our local system so that we can focus on how we can support our children and young people where they are, enable them to progress and celebrate their achievements.

3. National Funding update

- 3.1 The major update since the last committee meeting is that on 20th July 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) made an [announcement regarding high needs funding](#) for the financial year 2021-22. As a result of this, the financial projections are being updated. Broadly speaking, Warwickshire Is now expecting to receive an additional £4m per year from 2021/22 onwards compared to the original forecast. More information is included below in the financial implications section of this report.

4. Programme and Project updates

- 4.1 The SEND & Inclusion Change Programme consists of 31 projects (see Appendix 1). Most activity over July to August has taken place at programme level establishing the framework for those projects. Of note are:

- a) 7 projects have started and are live
- b) A further 6 projects to start this term
- c) 1 full business case approved (including full project plan and resources); 11 in draft
- d) Recruitment of an additional three project managers
- e) Communications strategy & financial monitoring strategy
- f) Draft performance dashboard and baselining
- g) Initial plan for organisational development
- h) First meeting of Programme Board (including Strategic Directors for Resources, Communities and People Directorates)
- i) Equality Impact Assessment being updated

- 4.2 Most of the first cohort of projects to have started are still in full business case stage. This means that projects have started to map and confirm the 'as-is' position. Each project then sets out the 'to-be process' with a plan of implementation which is approved by the programme board.

- 4.3 Noteworthy, is the progress on the following:

- a) *Establishing a new special school on the Pears site:* Thrive Education Partnership has been approved by DfE as the sponsor for the new school, following a presumption competition. The plan remains on track to open the new school in September 2021.
- b) *Ensuring that learners receive their educational entitlement:* New processes drafted and in engagement stage to ensure children out of school are monitored and placed in a timely manner
- c) *Development of a Quality Assurance Framework for EHC plans:* Quality assurance framework drafted and in engagement stage.

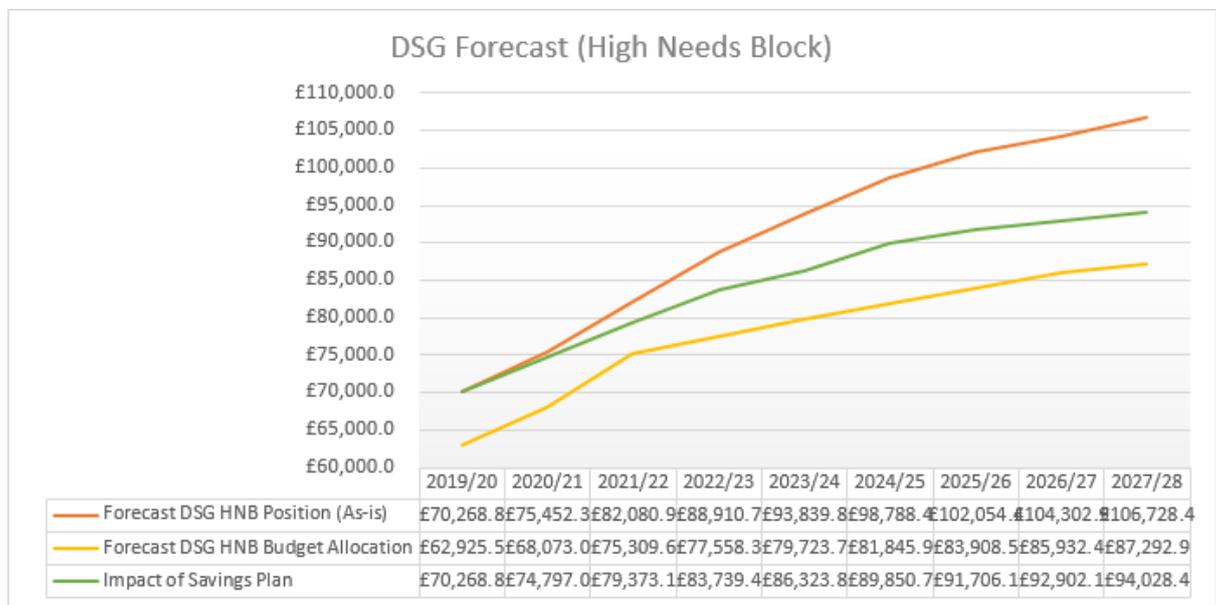
- 4.4 In addition, we continue to expand resourced provision as the previous round of commissioning new provision concludes. In September, Cabinet approved new resourced provision at Paddox Primary School and in October new resourced provision at Henley Primary School was also approved.

4.5 There is a commitment to engage with all stakeholders through the programme. As part of this an Elected Members Task and Finish Group is being established to provide assurance to Members on the programme and to identify areas where Members can add value. It is proposed that this group reports back to Overview & Scrutiny Committee in February 2021.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 As a result of the additional funding from central government, the overall cumulative deficit forecast by the end of 2024/25 has reduced from approximately £80m to £62m prior to Change Programme activities.

5.2 Taking into account planned savings from the Change Programme the overall cumulative deficit forecast by the end of 2024/25 has reduced from approximately £55m to £37m.



5.3 The additional funding is clearly welcomed. The formula used to distribute additional resources does, as before, favour more urban areas, Therefore the continued case for sufficient funding for SEND & Inclusion is likely to led by councils in the f40 group (generally upper tier and rural local authorities).

5.4 The remaining gap between budget allocation and forecast expenditure reinforces the need for progressing the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme.

6. Environmental Implications

6.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

7.1 The next steps are:

- a) Approval of full business cases for cohort 1 projects (September-October) – these include the Impower trial projects with schools
- b) Communications and engagement with school leaders and parent representatives (September-October)
- c) Recruitment of business change leads (October-November)
- d) Discussion with Schools Forum regarding allocation of resources (October – December)
- e) Establish Elected Members Task and Finish Group (November-February)
- f) Development of Planning Preparation Documents for cohort 2 projects (November – December)

Supporting Documents

1. DSG Recovery Plan, 9th July 2020, Cabinet
2. SEND & Inclusion Change Programme, 11th June 2020, Cabinet
3. Allocation of 2020/21 Dedicated Schools Grant, 30th January 2020, Cabinet
4. High Needs Block, 16th December 2019, Cabinet
5. SEND & Inclusion Strategy, 11th April 2019, Cabinet

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: Councillors Dahmash, P Williams, Chilvers, Skinner and C Davies