



SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING

10th October 2019

DSG Recovery Plan – Progress Update

1. Purpose

To update members of School Forum on the implementation of key projects within the Recovery Plan which are designed to reduce the future pressure on the DSG High Needs Block.

2. Background

In June 2019 School Forum supported £357k of additional investment from the High Needs Block to develop a range of projects which aim to increase capacity within mainstream schools to support children and young people with SEND. The projects funded through the investment are;

1. Primary Schools Nurture Programme: To implement a nurture pilot project designed to provide early support to children with social emotional and mental health needs within one primary school.
2. Specialist Teacher Support: To progress a small pilot project providing additional specialist education support across a school partnership/cluster.
3. Therapeutic Support: To identify and implement evidence based interventions and therapeutic models which could support children with SEND and children with additional social and emotional needs which impact on their learning.
4. Education Inclusion Partnership: To progress a schools inclusion partnership which shares responsibility and coordinates support and provision for complex cases and children with additional support needs across the school system, both within the primary and secondary sector.

Recovery Plans

The additional investment form part of a recovery plan which is required by the DfE for all local authorities that have an overall cumulative DSG deficit of 1% or more at the end of the financial year.

At the end of the 2018/19 financial year Rutland fell short of being required to submit a formal recovery plan to the DfE, in part due to additional funding received from the DfE in year. However, current predicted expenditure in 2019/20 is likely to require a formal submission in 2020 and therefore there remains a need to have a recovery plan in place to prevent further pressure.

Financial Modelling

To inform the Recovery Plan a 5 year projection of the High Need budget was produced, which sets out the likely funding and costs for supporting children within the SEND system over the next 5 years. The model utilises a number of demand based assumptions and highlights the extent of the challenge with the High Needs Block likely to continue to have a significant pressure with a potential accumulated overspend in excess of £1.8 million over the next 5 years.

The model provides a useful tool for showing the potential impact of any interventions and system changes on our financial position. For this purpose each project has been modelled to highlight their potential financial impact on the DSG and if projects achieve their anticipated outcomes with an applied 75% success rate, the recovery plan could have a positive impact and reduce the DSG overspend by circa 200k over 5 years.

The financial model is based on a number of assumptions of success e.g. proportionate reduction in special school placements etc. and it must be noted that each action within the recovery plan factors in assumed impact and there are no guarantees to each element. The success of projects is also subject to a number of influencing factors including the commitment of schools to engage, test and commit to alternative approaches.

3. Project Progress

Nurture Pilot (£100k)

We are aiming for this project to go live during this academic year and have set an ambitious target to begin formal delivery from March 2020.

Following the expression of interest process Edith Weston Academy was selected as the preferred provider to lead the delivery of the nurture pilot. Formal sign off by the school leadership and governors was secured in July 2019 and the project has progressed quickly.

A project board is in place with a project lead recruited by the school and supported by RCC officers. The project board is scheduled to meet monthly and is overseeing the implementation plan and key deliverables required including development of suitable space, staff recruitment, training, operating models and specifications, policy and provision maps etc.

Specialist Teacher (£50k)

Additional specialist teaching support aims to provide capacity across a cluster of two to three schools, delivering practical advice and support whilst working to identify creative teaching and learning approaches or suitable adaptations which can be delivered to support inclusive environments for children with additional needs.

Commissioning a provider instead of recruiting to a post is the preferred option at this stage because it is quicker, provides greater flexibility and resilience and allows the approach to be tested before formalising any permanent arrangements moving forward.

Discussions have been held with external providers who could be commissioned quickly to deliver additional specialist support to schools during this academic year. We have so far met with two providers and are in the process of securing this additional support with a view to going live in November 2019.

Education Inclusion Partnerships (EIP) (£70k)

Following an expression of interest four schools have confirmed their commitment to developing a primary partnership which are Catmose Primary, Ketton CofE, Cottesmore Academy and Uppingham CofE with another school expressing an interest.

Terms of reference, an operating model and EIP procedures have been drafted and will be developed further alongside those schools within the partnership over the next few months. In addition we have engaged an external consultant with experience in setting up EIPs with the intention of commissioning additional support to help develop the EIP.

Development of an EIP across secondary schools remains in the early stages but it is our intention to progress this utilising the same model within the primary sector.

Therapeutic Support (£100k)

At this stage no additional provisions have been identified and we continue to research suitable evidence led programmes which can add capacity and value to the packages of support for children with SEND and social and emotional needs. The identification of such interventions most likely come out of the activity identified above.

4. Value for Money and System Review Update

In addition to the projects outlined, and as part of a wider review of the SEND system, Rutland County Council have commissioned 'SEND Consultancy' to undertake an independent review of our mainstream designated specialist provisions in Rutland, as agreed by School Forum in June 2019.

'SEND Consultancy' are a collaborative association of leading consultants in SEND based in the East Midlands and will provide capacity to examine the current role of the provision available and the population of children for whom they cater which will include;

- A focus upon individual school phases and access to, and pathways from, each provision.
- Testing that the provision we have in Rutland is sufficient and whether it is achieving the outcomes for children, benchmarking against comparators in the region and country.
- Looking at models of inclusive practice and ways of working across provisions.
- Reviewing value for money and national benchmarking.

How will this work be undertaken?

SEND Consultancy will;

- Undertake site visits and work with leaders and colleagues from early year's settings, schools and DSPs to find out directly from them what works well and their vision for the future.
- Undertake interviews with Parent Carer representatives including interviews of parents/carers of children attending specialist provisions currently.
- Gather feedback from children and young people from DSPs and potential focus groups, with the agreement of schools in each DSP.
- Undertake data interrogating and benchmarking exercises.

At the conclusion of their work SEND Consultancy will provide a written report with suggested recommendations and next steps in enhancing and supporting specialist provisions in Rutland. It is anticipate this work will begin in October 2019.

5. Next Steps

Progress implementation of each of the projects described and report on progress at the next Schools Forum.

6. Recommendations

Members of School Forum note the project progress to date.