



## SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING

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18th June 2020

### DSG Recovery Plan – Position Update

#### 1. Purpose

To update members of School Forum on the progress of the Recovery Plan initiatives designed to reduce the pressure on the DSG High Needs Block.

#### 2. Background

School Forum have supported £357k of additional annual investment from the High Needs Block to develop a range of initiatives which aim to increase capacity within mainstream schools to support children and young people with SEND.

All projects which are developed under the 'recovery plan' will focus on the three priority areas as agreed through the school summit meetings with Head Teachers:

1. Children with SEND should be supported, as far as is possible and appropriate, within the least restrictive education environment close to home.
2. High needs funding and support interventions for children with SEND are not appropriately distributed and requires redistribution.
3. Additional support and funding are required earlier in the education system with investment in different types of support within and across mainstream schools.

#### Managing the high needs pressure

There is currently an accumulated deficit on the high needs budget of 458k which equates to 1.6% of the total designated school grant. As reported in January 2020 the DfE no longer require formal submission of a recovery plan where the overall deficit exceeds 1%, however the local authority must:

1. Provide information as and when requested by the DfE about its plans for managing its DSG account in the 2020 to 2021 financial year.
2. Provide information as and when requested by the DfE about pressures and potential savings on its high needs budget.
3. Meet with officials from the DfE as and when requested to discuss the local plans and financial situation.
4. Keep School Forum regularly updated about the DSG account and plans for handling it, including high needs pressures and potential saving.

Therefore initiatives under our recovery plan that will help prevent the existing pressure remains imperative and will ensure we continue to meet the requirements of the DfE.

### Financial Modelling - Latest Position

To support decision making and project investment, a five year projection of high needs expenditure has been developed utilising a number of demand based assumptions e.g. the annual growth rate of education health and care plans (EHCP) etc.

Previously this model indicated a significant future pressure on the budget with a projected overspend of £600k. However, the five year budget model is now being updated to account for a number of factors which we anticipate will influence the initial projection, this includes:

- Factors which are no longer in line with original assumptions including a higher rate of EHCPs maintained in Rutland (up 18% since June 2019) and a higher rate of children moving in county with EHCPs last year than anticipated etc.
- The current pandemic and potential impact on SEND and Inclusion demand.
- Additional funding provided into the high needs block.

Each project area 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 330k over five 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**

There are four work streams currently funded and during the first financial year only a proportion of funding, £79k, was utilised as projects developed. It is anticipated expenditure will increase once all aspects are fully operational and full costs are realized across a full financial year. The table below outlines the amounts allocated for each area and the expenditure which is already committed for the year.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Initial Allocation</b>	<b>Committed for 20/21</b>
Primary Nurture Model	£107k	£100k
SEMH Specialist Teacher	£80k	£78.6k
Education Inclusion Partnerships	£70k	£22.8k
Therapeutic Provisions	£100k	£35k
<b>Total Commitment YTD</b>		<b>£236.4k</b>

## Primary Nurture Model

The nurture model aims to strengthen approaches across primary schools through the delivery of outward facing expertise and advice to help schools adopt evidence based principles and practice to support children with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH).

A nurture project board run by Edith Weston Academy continues to meet regularly to oversee implementation which includes the delivery of;

- A nurture space providing a small number of on-site places to support the most complex children.
- Outreach based provision for schools, undertaking school visits, providing expertise, advice and training to support other schools to implement the principles.

Arrangements for the provision including referral processes, operating models etc. have been completed and were due to launch in March. Due to the lockdown this has been put on hold, however the school are now planning some virtual introduction sessions with schools to launch the provision.

A number of children with SEND, who were likely to require special school provision if provision was not provided in their mainstream school, have already received support at the school and are making positive progress.

## Specialist Teacher Support

Rutland County Council have commissioned Leicester City Council to deliver additional specialist teaching support for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) for two days a week which began in December 2019.

There are currently two specialist teachers providing support in Rutland schools and their role involves delivering practical advice and support, including case work, 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.

Due to the limited capacity the provider has focused on those schools where children have been identified as at risk of immediate exclusion due to SEMH needs, and the provider has met and delivered support in seven schools undertaking observation and providing advice and guidance. Due to the pandemic the provider has not visited all schools as intended but continues to offer support and training for schools during the transition period.

The initial project was a pilot to ascertain the impact and views of school on the benefit of the service. Feedback from the schools who have received support has been highly positive and there is an appetite for further provision across schools to meet demand. It is intended therefore to increase the SEMH based provision to full time from September 2020 utilising the full budget allocated to this area.

## Education Inclusion Partnerships (EIP)

The school inclusion partnership aims to share responsibility and coordinate support and resource for complex cases and for children with additional support needs across the school system.

An external provider with experience in delivering EIPs has been commissioned for up to two days per week to co-ordinate and oversee implementation of the partnerships across the primary and secondary sector.

### Primary EIP:

- All primary schools have signed up the partnership memorandum of understanding with six primary schools, who are representative of the whole sector, form the primary partnership panel. These are: English Martyrs, Catmose Primary, Ketton CofE, Cottesmore Academy, Uppingham CofE and Oakham CofE.
- All the relevant processes including referral mechanisms have been distributed to primary schools with the first meeting scheduled to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> March.
- Due to the pandemic the EIP has been suspended and therefore has yet to formally hold the first panel meeting. It is anticipated the EIP will sit again in September with an interim meeting to be held in July to prepare for relaunch.

### Secondary EIP:

Development of an EIP across secondary school is yet formally progress but the intention is to progress this utilising the same model within the primary sector and we have begun discussions with other secondary schools who have implemented EIPs.

### Therapeutic Support

Funding has been set aside 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.

This area remains in its infancy, however we have met with providers to look at options of what could be made available on a spot purchase basis, including a range of health based provisions and specialist teaching support. This work has not developed substantially since lockdown but dialogue will remain with providers to establish an offer during the next academic year.

To support the reopening of schools and the transition of children back into school funding has been ring fenced from this fund to purchase additional capacity such as school training packages and educational psychology support etc.

## **4. Value for Money and System Review Update**

SEND Consultancy have completed the first stage of their review of our specialist nursery and primary provision which involved undertaking site visits and working closely with the school leadership and SEND team in the Parks, Oakham CofE and early year's providers in Rutland to conduct an initial review of the provision and the pathway from early years in to the primary phase.

A final report is due during June which will set out recommendations for developing the early years and primary SEND and Inclusion offer for Rutland children.

## **5. Other Developments**

### Special Educational Need Inclusion Fund (SENIF)

Local Authorities are required to have a SENIF to support 3 and 4 year olds with SEND who are taking up the free entitlement. The fund aims to support early year's providers to address the needs of individual children with lower level or emerging SEN who do not have an EHCP.

Guidance now requires that this fund is available for children who reside out of county but attend a Rutland early years setting and as such the fund has been adapted to support this.

The current budget for the SENIF is £50k per annum with an average expenditure of 55-60k per annum. The intention is to remove the cap on funding hours currently in place to enable children with SEND to be supported up to full time in an early years setting, where this is deemed appropriate. Estimations are that this may increase expenditure by up to 50k per annum, however the high needs block has received an increase of £450k this financial year, in part to support changes to the SENIF, and therefore we would expect to allocate 10% of this increase, circa 45k, to the SENIF which would meet the potential increase to expenditure.

## **6. Next Steps**

Continue to implement each project and monitor their success, measuring outcomes for children and gathering feedback from schools with a view to determining next steps.

## **7. Recommendations**

Members of School Forum note the project progress to date.