



SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING

1st October 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' have a 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

The forecasted accumulated deficit on the high needs budget is 810k by 31st March 2021 which equates to 2.6% of the total designated school grant (DSG). 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. This report and the Finance update report are both examples of the Council meeting this obligation

As yet no request has been made by the DfE to review the Councils recovery plan. 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 we reported the five year budget model was 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.

This piece of work has been delayed due to the Councils Covid response, but it will be completed for an update at the next schools forum.

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.

Project	Initial Allocation	Committed for 20/21
Primary Nurture Model	£107k	£100k
SEMH Specialist Teacher	£80k	£78.6k
Education Inclusion Partnerships	£70k	£22.8k
Therapeutic Provisions	£100k	£35k
Total	£357k	£236.4k

The commitment above is reflected in the forecast deficit and will be reviewed in line with reviewing the overall financial modelling.

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 indicated their support for the partnership, the vast majority have now signed the 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.
- A handful of Primary schools are yet to sign the agreement.
- The EIP, suspended during the lockdown, will meet in September an interim meeting was held in July to plan.

Secondary EIP:

Development of an EIP across secondary school is yet formally progress but the intention is to progress this, utilising a similar model as the primary sector and we have begun discussions with other secondary schools who have implemented EIPs. This work is a priority for 2020-21.

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;

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

Referral processes and a clear operating model linked to the Education Inclusion Partnership are being established. During lockdown virtual introduction sessions with school SENCo's have been helpful in launching the outreach approach and the on-site provision.

The schools have already had some significant success in supporting children in making positive progress, who might otherwise have been likely to require special school provision.

Specialist Teacher Support

Rutland County Council initially 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. This contract was extended for a year to provide full week coverage from September 2020 based on the positive feedback from schools and impact demonstrated following interventions that had been undertaken. It will therefore utilise the full budget in this financial year.

The specialist teachers support 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 initial capacity the provider focused on 7 schools where children were identified as at risk of imminent exclusion due to SEMH needs. Support and training for schools during the transition period was offered during lockdown when the teachers could not visit school sites. The provision is now the equivalent of 5 days a week in term time, offering support to all Rutland Primaries through the EIP.

Therapeutic Support

Funding has been set aside to identify and implement evidence based interventions and therapeutic models which will support children with SEND and children with additional social and emotional needs which impact on their learning.

A range of interventions have been reviewed, areas of focus are emerging from the requests for support already received; specialist teaching support is now available and a range of health based provisions such as therapy for children at risk of avoidable language delay, providing individual or group work for vocabulary, attention and listening, speech sounds, narrative approaches, verbal reasoning, social use of language.

This work has made some progress in some areas since lockdown and dialogue will remain with providers to establish the fuller offer during this academic year.

To support the reopening of schools and the transition of children back into school a small pot of funding was 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 was provided in June which will set out recommendations for developing the early years and primary SEND and Inclusion offer for Rutland children. A development day is planned for 24th September.

5. 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.

6. Recommendations

Members of School Forum note the project progress to date.