



## SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING

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10th December 2020

### DSG Recovery Plan – Position Update

#### 1. Purpose

To update members of School Forum on the progress of the Recovery Plan initiatives and pilot projects 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 860k by 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

| <b>Project</b>                   | <b>Initial Allocation</b> | <b>Committed for 20/21</b> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Primary Nurture Model            | £107k                     | £100k                      |
| SEMH Specialist Teacher          | £80k                      | £52.6k                     |
| Education Inclusion Partnerships | £70k                      | £20.1k                     |
| Therapeutic Provisions           | £100k                     | £31k                       |
| Total                            | £357k                     | £203.7k                    |

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-led inclusion partnership shares responsibility and coordinates support and resources for complex cases and for children with additional support needs across the school system.

Caroline Crisi provides the coordination and initial assessment function on behalf of schools when cases are put forward. Caroline is an external provider with experience in delivering EIPs has been working with schools since the EIP was instigated in March providing up to two days per week to co-ordinate and oversee implementation of the partnerships across the primary sector, initially. Caroline will attend the meeting in December to talk about cases identified so far.

## Primary EIP:

- All primary schools have now signed up through a memorandum of understanding and given their support for the partnership.
- 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 referral process is now established and Caroline is available to give advice and guidance about the EIP and link schools to immediate sources of support, e.g. Specialist SEMH linked teachers.
- The EIP, has met twice this academic year and 27 referrals have been received since it started in March 2020. Each interventions impact on each case is evaluated in consultation with School SENDCos. This will be compiled and reported regularly to Schools Forum
- A toolkit of resources has been compiled, it brings together all of the services that can assist schools in implementing effective inclusion support for students, from universal services through to more complex cases. As this grows it will be placed on the Rutland Local Offer site.
- A Providers meeting is facilitated monthly by the EIP Coordinator to support the positive interaction of all of the new providers that have been commissioned to join resources alongside existing services. There has been great feedback about this mechanism in helping information exchange and clarifying roles.

## Secondary EIP:

Secondary mechanisms for inclusion support are in development, the intention is to progress utilising a similar model as the primary sector. This work is a priority.

## 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 'attachment' 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 monthly.
- Capital works on site to establish provision for a small number of on-site places to support the most complex children are complete.
- The arrangements for Covid have affected how the onsite provision can be delivered and children assigned to the provision are being supported primarily in mainstream class bubbles.
- Outreach based provision for schools, providing expertise, advice and training to support other schools to implement the principles continues using video conferencing.
- Referral processes and a clear operating model linked to the Education Inclusion Partnership established.

The schools have already had some significant success in supporting 3 children in making positive progress who might otherwise have been likely to require special school provision. The numbers of children supported by the provision so far are in line with initial cost modelling which underpinned the business rationale.

## Specialist Teacher Support

Rutland County Council commissions Leicester City Council on behalf of Schools Forum to deliver additional specialist teaching support for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

- The contract provides full week coverage and has had good feedback from schools. 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 as soon as issues arise.
- There has been some great feedback from schools on the work that the teachers have been able to offer primaries;

*Langham: Thank you very much for your support, which was appreciated at a very difficult time.*

*Oakham: I have already heard that yesterday's training was very useful. This week's training has been fab, really useful and informative. I'd recommend it to others.*

*Whissendine: I really hope that RCC renew your contract as your work with has been so helpful.*

- Where case work may be required they may be deployed through the EIP as part of a case intervention, commissioned to specifically develop creative teaching and learning approaches or suitable adaptations to enhance the inclusive environment a for child with additional needs.

### 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.

- As the EIP becomes more established the range of provision required becomes clearer.
- The EIP is careful not to duplicate core offer NHS statutorily required work such as Speech and Language therapy but is keen that there is effective join up at a lower level of need to prevent cases escalating.
- The EIP has spot purchased to intervene to meet the following emerging needs for children so far; specialist tutoring, specialist counselling, speech and language therapy, additional specific psychological interventions.
- From January 2021 there is expected to be a senior Speech Language and Communication Therapeutic professional commissioned 3 days a week from Leicestershire Primary Trust to assist better communication needs pathways across from Early Years to Secondary phase and to impact avoidable language delay, facilitating individual or group work for vocabulary, social use of language etc.

Linked to this work is the Wellbeing for Education package, to support the transition of children back into school, and their well-being over the coming academic year. This work is being delivered by Partners in Psychology in Rutland and comprises national training content developed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Anna Freud Centre. Partners in Psychology will implement a bespoke training and resource package for all local schools this term based on the national training framework. Each school will receive at least half a day each of support based on evidence based approaches to transition, emotional well-being and trauma.

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

SEND Consultancy continue to facilitate further work following the first stage of their review of our early years, specialist nursery and primary provision. The initial report set out recommendations for developing the early years and primary SEND and Inclusion pathway and offer for Rutland children. Following a development day with school leaders and RCC staff on 24<sup>th</sup> September, a shared vision, an agreed MOU, agreement on finances and an Action Plan, further development work is planned as follows:

- Site visits continue working closely with the school leadership and SEND team in the Parks, Oakham CofE and a project plan with regular meetings put in place with RCC to re-imagine and explore possibilities for the overall early year's provision for Rutland and the pathway from early years in to the primary phase.
- The newly appointed RCC Senior Inclusion Officer, Early Years and Primary Phase will work with the schools on the site one day a week.
- SEND Consultancy Team will provide an update report to Schools Forum at its next meeting

## **5. Next Steps**

Continue to implement each project and monitor 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.