



## **SCHOOLS' FORUM MEETING**

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**9<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

### **DSG SEND Recovery Plan update**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To update members of Schools Forum on the progress of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Recovery Plan initiatives and projects designed to reduce the pressure on the Designated School Grant (DSG) High Needs Block
- 1.2 To inform Schools Forum about the planning and progress to address the increased demand for secondary places for pupils with SEND.

#### **2. Financial Business case and Context**

- 2.1 The projected financial deficit on DSG by March 2022, is predicted to be in the region of £822k. The High Needs cumulative deficit is projected to be about £1m. There has been additional Government funding over the last few years, but this hasn't kept pace with either inflation or been in line with the growing demand driven by parental choice.
- 2.2 Whilst the High Needs Budget continues to run a deficit, costs will be met by schools since local authorities have no legal responsibility in this area which means that while this continues schools are footing the bill.
- 2.3 Local Authorities in this situation are strongly encouraged to have a management plan in place, Rutland has the SEND Recovery Plan overseen by the SEND Programme Board and reporting regularly to Schools Forum.
- 2.4 Local Authorities and its statutory partners await the outcome of the national review of the SEND Code of Practice and the new SEND Ofsted inspection Framework.
- 2.5 This Recovery plan was designed collaboratively and set in action following a Schools Summit with schools in November 2018, setting out the challenges and potential solutions. A second Schools Summit took place in early November 2021 to understand the regional picture, determine working groups to impact on pressure points and focus input from schools for the next phase of SEND Recovery plan activity.
- 2.6 Schools Forum commits £357k yearly as part of a 5-year plan to change practice, start to halt the rise in year-on-year pressures and begin to address the budget deficit. The actions commenced in January 2020.
- 2.7 Success measures for this type of work, regionally, are predicated on reducing the need for any authorities' use of independent school places, review and reform of the 'Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) offer', and in Rutland the SEND Recovery Plan projects are particularly focused on reviewing and reforming early years pathways, reforming commissioning practices to address sufficiency problems and

action to help schools reduce inaccurate identification of children wrongly labelled as having SEND which can otherwise lead to underachievement, regionally this has been identified as sometimes due to a poorly designed or taught curriculum.

- 2.8 The success of all the projects is also dependent on the willingness and commitment of schools to work collaboratively, engage, test and believe that the alternative evidence-based approaches will have the impact required. Impact from programmes such as these is known to be influenced or undermined by a lack of confidence and resilience of partners to apply the change in practice.
- 2.9 There is also likely to be an impact on the SEND Recovery plan outcomes not yet quantifiable as a result of the pandemic in increasing SEND and Inclusion demand. The number of EPCPs continues to rise, with 274 EPCPs and 20 cases in the assessment process.
- 2.10 To support decision making and project investment, the SEND Recovery Plan uses a financial business model to track high needs expenditure. This has demand-based assumptions which include:
  - **The total budget for the recovery projects for 2021/22 is £357k**
  - High needs funding will increase by 5% annually.
  - A recurring 0.5% transfer from the schools' block.
  - Increase in placement costs which has been extrapolated using the change in EHCP plans over the last few years.
  - Updated average placement costs based on latest information.
- 2.11 The financial model also assumes success factors such as proportionate reduction in special school placements. The group of projects are evaluated together within the recovery plan so there is an assumed impact and no guarantees specific to each project.

### **3. SEND Recovery Plan Projects**

- 3.1 RCC commissions services on behalf of Schools to get support for staff and adjust practice in each school, to provide assessment of needs at the earliest stage, help staff support parents and coach practical evidence-based interventions.
- 3.2 There is a significant opportunity to reduce high cost placements and therefore reduce the high needs budget being drawn away from the mainstream school sector across all phases
- 3.3 The key projects that make up the SEND Recovery Plan and that have been activated to support this work are;

### **4. The Education Inclusion Partnership and Sector Led Panel**

- 4.1 The range of projects within the SEND Recovery Plan, are delivering a number of initiatives new to Rutland, and which are intended to increase capacity within mainstream schools by assisting schools to act early where they see a child's social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs are escalating and put in place support or

evidence-based interventions that may prevent children moving into the SEND system and thus help children to continue successfully in mainstream education without the need for an EHCP

- 4.2 Specialist SEMH teachers are linked to schools as the first place to raise any concerns about a child's needs and get expert input prior to any case level work being commissioned through the EIP panel
- 4.3 The Education Inclusion Partnership draws on existing Rutland resources and commissions interventions where there is a gap in services, it has purchased interventions such as specialist tutoring, specialist counselling, speech and language therapy, additional specific psychological interventions. This is detailed in the Toolkit of Resources, clearly outlined, and regularly updated for schools to make services easy to find on the Local Offer site.
- 4.4 Primary Phase Panel meets monthly to allocate resources for cases that need specific action- a coordination and assessment function helps make sure these are targeted and manages the process to activate resources.
- 4.5 100 children have now been considered through this sector led panel process. The work is designed to address the gaps that schools identified at the start of the Recovery plan period. To build knowledge, skills, confidence, and expertise to swiftly activate resources. It is expected that in time that staff will have improved confidence and understanding of need and may not require a panel, it may be possible to commission directly from academy or school funds or pool resources at a local level and utilise these directly. All primary schools are now accessing resources through the panel for particular cases with parental consent.
- 4.6 A senior Speech, Language and Communication provides 3 days a week from Leicestershire Primary Trust (LPT). This specialist has begun building relationships with Early Years settings and coaching friendly communicating environment skills in order to impact avoidable language delay. This is to supplement statutory work and to work at a lower level of need, for example, facilitating individual or group work for vocabulary, social use of language. They are also beginning work with Secondary School teams.
- 4.7 There is universally positive feedback for the work that this primary schools led partnership, detailed feedback is collected three times a year, most recently in Summer 2021 and shared with Schools Forum in September 2021 update report as well as at the second Schools Summit held earlier in November 2021.
- 4.8 These are the priorities for the remaining academic year, (2021 – 2022) to underpin progress in positive education inclusion practice;
  - Secondary EIP arrangements bringing a small team around particular identified children - this is reported to be having some significant impact in the school where it is beginning to be embedded.
  - Primary inclusion practice, utilising the EIP commissioned interventions which are continuing positively
  - Value for Money and the Early Years Inclusion Pathway commissioned work- in particular in partnership with Oakham CE and The Parks and now focussing the

next phase of work on wider Early Years providers. This is the subject of a separate update report to SF December 2021

- Play Therapy interventions have been trialled with two different providers in the Autumn term 2021.
- SENCo network for Primary and Secondary SENCos will continue to develop peer support and expertise in collaboration with Rutland Learning Trust and draw on regional Whole Schools SEND resources.

## **5. Nurture Evidence Based Practice**

- 5.1 Nurture practice has been piloted successfully in Rutland in partnership with Edith Weston Primary School part of the Brooke Hill Academy Trust. Nurture interventions are evidence-based programmes for specific children to increase their emotional wellbeing, intended for primary school children who have difficulties coping in mainstream classes and may be at risk of underachievement and disrupting their education and that of others. They support children's mental health and wellbeing and can lead to improved self-esteem and enhanced school achievement and attainment.
- 5.2 The Nurture pilot was initially designed to support up to 6 students yearly on site at Edith Weston and further equip Rutland primary schools to confidently assess attachment needs and help build the confidence of all schools to provide Nurture practice and interventions on their own school site, in order to specifically prevent children's exclusion or escalation out of the mainstream school system. One of the children assisted through a Nurture intervention moved from a high-cost placement (circa £75k yearly)
- 5.3 In September 2021 Schools Forum received a report detailing the impact over the 16 months of the Nurture pilot including through the pandemic restrictions. 16 individual children and their associated schools had been supported with Nurture interventions. 9 received (or continue to receive) on site interventions (agreed through the multi-agency panel) and 7 children through outreach support from the Nurture hub staff.
- 5.4 RCC are developing an agreement with Edith Weston Primary school to bring Nurture into standard practice as agreed at Schools Forum in September 2021. This will secure these successful interventions for Rutland and focus on further propagating sustainable Nurture practice across Rutland schools.

## **6. Department for Education - [High Needs Provision Capital Allocations](#)**

- 6.1 Part of the SEND Recovery plan is to grow the capability and capacity of Secondary schools for 'what is ordinarily available in local schools'. The Department for Education (DfE) have provided Capital grant funding programmes to help increase mainstream school places and maintain children with SEND in mainstream provision locally. RCC are working with our parent representative group to build reassurance among parents and building SEN confidence in local school transition arrangements
- 6.2 In February 2021, analysis indicated that the number of children with Education Health and Care plans requiring Secondary school places in coming years, were significantly larger cohorts than had been supported in prior years. The presenting risk with larger groups of children with SEND, being that they may not transition positively into their

Secondary school place and could escalate unnecessarily into more specialist (higher cost) provision.

- 6.3 Following discussion about the Secondary school pressures at Schools Forum, direct approaches were made to each of the Secondary Schools. The DCS and Head of Service met with Head teachers and SEND leaders outlining the needs of the children to be met. Following this, each school was invited to submit an Expression of Interest, examined by key RCC officers, Rutland Parent Carer Voice representatives and experienced professionals from another out of county school. It was determined that the High Needs Provision Capital Allocations (HNPCA) and remaining capital funds will help enable any facilities modification required to provide additional mainstream facilities to support children to remain in education locally.
- 6.4 The new development, working with Uppingham Community College as a lead partner, with a working title for the facilities of 'Mainstream plus' provision is aiming to enable more children with EHC plans to transition from Primary education effectively and thrive in local mainstream Secondary phase education. A business rationale for placement and to ensure that the arrangements can meet children's needs and are sustainable is in development
- 6.5 A feasibility report has been commissioned by RCC to explore options with the UCC site. The UCC Project Board is now meeting monthly and reports to the SEND programme Board, work on the how the education provision will look is underway to assist operational and business planning and an interim solution for facilities is expected to be in place for September 2022 to take the first cohort of 10 students. Further facilities development will follow once operational plans are determined more fully. A total available Capital budget for this work is £821,500.
- 6.6 The high-level Capital project planning has been revised to take account of recent changes as follows,

**By end of OCTOBER 2021**

Capital Feasibility brief Begin legal contract work  
Chosen Academy Trust Governors initial approval  
Capital Project Board established at to steer operational and capital plans



**By end of March 2021**

RCC Cabinet approval to delegate funding to the DCS and Lead Member and appoint lead partner UCC  
Develop operational specification for places to meet described needs  
Interim Facilities solution determined and commissioned by UCC  
Legal Contract agreed for delivery of Capital project and operational plan  
UCC Governing body approval to proceed  
RCC Cabinet approval of programme planned  
UCC business case for significant change, Regional schools commissioner agrees increase in pupil admission numbers



**During 2022**

Refurb interim solution on site begins mid/end of February  
Wider facilities changes agreed and commissioned  
  
Project Board continues to meet  
  
Schools Forum receive regular updates  
  
DFE reporting as required to draw down funding

## **7. Next Steps**

- 7.1 Continue to implement each project and monitor success, measuring outcomes for children and gathering feedback from schools with a view to determining next steps.
- 7.2 Actively review the financial impact of the Recovery Plan projects on the High Needs Block deficit for which there will be further detail in January 2022
- 7.3 Utilise the learning and actions from the Task and Finish Group to review and revise the SEND funding formula and use of Teaching Assistant hours and work toward more creative use of the funds. It is important to note that dependent on the recommendations of this group there could be further implications by putting more pressure on the HNF if it requires an uplift to the funding formula.

## APPENDIX A

### Recovery Plan Risk and Issues Log Summary

Risk of Issue No	Date opened		Risk description	R/I	Likelihood	Impact	Cumulative risk	Mitigations and actions
SEND CP 39	13/06/2019	Recovery Plan project	Nurture-A single nurture provision or approach encourages overreliance and increase in referrals from other schools and underlines collective response to support children with SEMH needs	Issue	2	2	4	Schools Forum commitment to all school training and collective response to Nurture practice
SEND CP 40	13/06/2019	Recovery Plan project	Nurture-Communication of the model and how the school is perceived, positively or negatively, which can influence parental choice of a school for their child.	Issue	2	3	6	Effective communications strategy, and liaison with parents. Staff training. Support form whole school communities and wider partnership.
SEND CP 41	13/06/2019	Recovery Plan project	Nurture-The SEND Regulations, including the requirements within the SEND Code of Practice, and the requirement to support parental preference may undermine the opportunity to place children and therefore cannot guarantee children will take up places.	Risk	2	2	4	Effective communications strategy, and liaison with parents. Staff training. Covid requirements are impacting how practice can be supported in EW with the Nurture provision- bubbles mean that additional staffing has been needed revised downward risk on 17/12/2020  Risk escalating as more children are placed, outreach to other schools assists practice elsewhere. This risk rating likely to increase June 2021
SEND CP 42	13/06/2019	Recovery Plan project	Nurture-Small scale limits the levels of peer learning across the school system.	Issue	4	2	6	Schools Forum commitment to all school training and collective response. This is further mitigated by the Boxhall all schools training being



Risk of Issue No	Date opened		Risk description	R/I	Likelihood	Impact	Cumulative risk	Mitigations and actions
								offered in Autumn Winter 2020-21 and mop up planned once teaching staff have more capacity in April 2021. Outreach support continues.
SEND CP 49	19/08/2019	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that the potential for positive impact on the SEND system cannot be quantified in measurable cost avoidance and therefore cannot be shown to impact the HNB recovery plan	Risk	3	3	9	<p>This overall impact of reduced pressure on HNB -risk remains, although other key benefits and outcomes that the programme set out to achieve are very likely to be delivered. Wider system change will be slower.</p> <p>Overall saving to be revisited to ensure no double counting.</p> <p>Measures/Key indicators for the Service delivery Plan linking to transitions into Yr7 and Post 16 and an evaluation timetable will be put in place.</p> <p>The Covid Pandemic has put additional pressures on the SEND systems with increased plans being requested. Impact evaluation planned for June 2021. The uplift in requests for assessment needs to be reflected</p>
SEND CP 52	21/10/2019	All	Risk that investment from the High Needs Budget to make the savings is ceased, which would affect all projects and would result in none or fewer of the benefits anticipated to be associated with the projects being realised	Risk	3	3	9	<p>Clear benefit realisation strategy including financial incentives outlined and communicated to Schools Forum to allow continued investment.</p> <p>Schools Forum reports 13/02/2020, 1/06/2020 and planned for 10/12 and 11/02/2021 17/06/2021 set out progress.</p> <p>The Covid Pandemic has put additional pressures on the SEND systems with increased plans being requested. Impact evaluation planned for June 2021. Qualitative impact and feedback contained in EIP coordinator reports</p>

Risk of Issue No	Date opened		Risk description	R/I	Likelihood	Impact	Cumulative risk	Mitigations and actions
								monthly. EIP panel sector led oversee spend and impact.
SENDCP 63	18/01/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a rising risk of pupils requiring a secondary specialist type placement impacted by school PAN for the 2021/22 academic year.	Risk	3	4	12	Working with schools to determine options for 2021/22 academic year. Project plan in development. Additional Capital funding proposed grant from DfE HNPCA £500k requires plan to be published by 30/6/2021 (now complete)
SENDCP 65	19/04/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that none of the Secondary Schools is prepared to develop sufficient Specialist Mainstream places to meet EHCP need in coming years	Risk	3	4	12	Meetings with all Secondaries have been arranged as well as a workshop to confidentially discuss each of the children in the 2022 cohort to help inform the planning and EOI stage, to help design suitable facilities and utilise the Capital resources available to grow secondary places
SENDCP 66	19/04/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that a suitable model cannot be found to accommodate all children with SEND and an EHCP needing education places locally in coming years.	Risk	3	4	12	Meetings with all Secondaries have been arranged as well as a workshop to anonymously discuss the 2022 cohort to help inform the planning and EOI stage, to help design a suitable facilities and utilise the Capital resources available to grow secondary places
SENDCP 68	19/04/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that School leaders do not engage with the Regional Whole SEND programme	Risk	1	3	3	EIP developments should assist this work. Some schools already taking up Whole School SEND model, need targeted approach.

Risk of Issue No	Date opened		Risk description	R/I	Likelihood	Impact	Cumulative risk	Mitigations and actions
SEND CP 69	19/04/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that the Primary SENCo network, which is crucial to leading practice change for inclusion in schools does not have good attendance following establishment of the new Super Hub arrangements	Risk	2	4	6	Caroline Crisi and Lizzie Papworth working with RLT schools on supporting an effective network post Rutland Learning Trust (RLT), working with Resilient Rutland to fund training and Regional Whole SEND programme. Building on the work of the RLT.
SEND CP 70	19/04/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that Cabinet do not agree to an extension and direct award of the EIP Coordinator contract, and this leads to delays in implementing change and loss of commitment from schools	Risk	2	4	6	Open and productive contract negotiations with the EIP coordinator. Cabinet report seeking approval to extend and direct award is planned for June. SF report requests approval to progress. Cabinet report in preparation. Approved, this will close once commissioning timeline is clear
SEND CP 71	17/05/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that Edith Weston is unable to continue the Nurture interventions Pilot since they have admitted additional SEND pupils and this is impacting capacity on site	Risk	2	6	12	Paper to Board on 18th June to explore options to continue the Nurture approach. Paper to SF for September 2021 meeting re future plans
SEND CP 72	17/05/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that development work for OCE and The Parks does not lead to a viable and sustainable early years solution	Risk	3	6	18	SEND Consultancy to bring update report to June Board. KIT meetings continue with OCE. Awaiting firm Governor body plan to enable work plan for academic year 2021-22

Risk of Issue No	Date opened		Risk description	R/I	Likelihood	Impact	Cumulative risk	Mitigations and actions
SEND CP 74	17/05/2021	Recovery Plan project	There is a risk that Edith Weston Trust do not choose to continue to deliver the Nurture interventions following pilot	Risk	2	6	12	Work over Summer 2021 to evaluate the savings and start to develop a future viable model for Schools Forum consideration.
SEND CP 77	19/07/2021	Recovery Plan project	There are reported building industry problems as a result of Covid, this could affect the UCC build programme timelines. In relation an architect to carry out the work, capacity, availability and materials	Risk	2	6	12	This will need to be explored and contingencies drawn up as part of the feasibility process. Important to appoint an experienced practitioners