

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 21 February 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

SUBJECT: High Needs Review

PORTFOLIO: Children, Education and Social Care

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the High Needs Strategic Planning Review. It sets out the five main recommendations and seeks permission to commission support to undertake the implementation phase of the review.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board

- 1) Agree the five recommendations identified by the review; and**
- 2) Agree to commission Peopletoo to undertake the implementation phase of the review.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In 2014 The Children and Families Act introduced some of the most far reaching and significant changes to the way that local authorities and partners in health identified, assessed and addressed the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities. To respond to these changes Halton re-organised its SEND support and services in order to respond to this change.
- 3.2 Over the same period of time local authorities nationally have been experiencing a huge rise in demand for services for children and young people with SEND, in addition the system of funding High Needs has changed, the needs of children and young people with additional support requirements have become more complex and since 2014 support has been extended to cover children from 0 to 25 years.
- 3.3 On 30th January 2019, the BBC reported that of the 136 responses to a recent FOI, 123 local authorities had confirmed that they were overspent on their High Needs budget and it was estimated that this overspend was in excess of £324 million.

- 3.4 The increase in volume and complexity has meant that in Halton, the local provision can no longer meet need and despite increased funding from the DFE in December and the agreement of a 1% transfer from schools budgets to the High Needs Budgets costs are outstripping the available funding. The current system is therefore unsustainable.
- 3.5 Using a revenue funding grant provided by the DFE it was agreed that Halton would commission an independent review of SEND. In April 2018 Peopletoo were awarded the commission and they commenced work in May 2018. The first phase of this work has now been completed. Through the review the Council aimed to gain:
- A detailed understanding of the SEND population;
 - A detailed understanding of the special school population and pupil profile;
 - A detailed understanding of the future needs and profile of specialist provision to meet that need;
 - A detailed understanding of future post-16 needs and opportunities to improve provision and capacity in the local communities;
 - A detailed understanding of the views of all stakeholders in terms of existing strengths and the opportunities to improve high needs provision;
 - A detailed understanding of the perceived barriers to inclusion in mainstream schools and colleges with recommendations for potential solutions;
 - A detailed understanding of the total level of resources available and how to effectively target these to meet need; and
 - A detailed understanding of potential challenges, sensitivities and conflicts of interest, together with potential solutions to these.
- 3.6 The final report identified three key findings. Firstly, too many children with SEND are being moved on or excluded from mainstream schools as schools struggle to manage their needs and especially adapt to what is becoming the “new norm” in respect of Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs. Secondly as the needs of the SEND cohort has evolved, the current model of Special School and Resource Bases had not kept up with this, hence the provision is not fit for purpose in addressing current SEND needs effectively. Finally, assessment processes for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) can be inconsistent, lacking challenge, and detached from financial and commissioning processes until too late in the process.
- 3.7 To address the key findings identified by the review the following five high level recommendations were made:

Recommendation 1

To undertake a cultural change programme with schools focusing on inclusion, reducing permanent exclusions, with the desire and ability to manage SEMH, with appropriate support within schools, and with support from the Authority and Special Schools.

Recommendation 2

To remodel how the Borough uses its Special School provision so that it works with pupils with the most complex needs only, reducing dependency on independent provision; alongside a remodelling of how these operate to enable children and young people with SEND to have the best opportunity to experience some form of mainstream education where appropriate.

Recommendation 3

To remodel the Resource Base provision to better reflect need, and develop a more consistent, outcome driven approach to their delivery supported by local Special Schools, in doing so.

Recommendation 4

To change the operating method of the Pupil Referral Unit and its relationship to schools so that it can maximise the integration of pupils back into mainstream.

Recommendation 5

To redesign the assessment and decision- making process so that it is better informed, ensure that it is person centred, more consistent, spend is managed and needs are identified early and collectively through the EHCP process to inform future commissioning.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the key findings and recommendations of the report are shared with all partners, including health; early years settings, schools and colleges across the borough as well Parents and Carers through the Parent/Carer Forum, children and young people and all Officers involved in SEND.
- 4.2 Following the completion of the review Peopletoo were asked to set out the actions needed to implement the main recommendations. It is proposed that they be commissioned to undertake this further piece of work to ensure we can move at pace to implement the significant changes required. This second piece of work will include:

- A detailed end to end redesign of the Assessment Pathway;
- Case Audit of 60 EHCPs equally split across 2014-2018 to determine the quality of plans;
- Detailed business case on new model of operation, reducing use of independent special schools
- Work with stakeholder to co-design the offer of specialist provision in Halton including entrance and exit criteria, KPIs and outcomes
- Identify a timetable to implement the changes based on actual pupils coming through the system and model the budget going forward over the next 3 years.
- Draft an SLA in consultation with schools. Determine price and performance indicators and how to obtain value for money for the services; only paying for actual services delivered.

4.3 There is a commitment to work with parents and carers, children and young people, schools, settings and services in co-designing Halton specialist provision.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 At each School Forum meeting a report is presented estimating the current High Need commitments. The latest report on 16th January showed that even with the additional DFE funding in 2018/2019 and the 1% transfer from schools budgets the estimated deficit at the start of 2019/2020 is £430,970. With the highest level of overspend on placing children and young people in independent provision.

5.2 The costs of the Phase 2 Peopletoo commission can be funded through using the savings generated from the current vacant Divisional Manager for Inclusion post and income generated by the Education, Inclusion and Provision Department.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Developing more inclusive local provision that meet the needs of children and young with SEND in Halton allows pupils to be educated within their own community alongside their peer groups.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Current provision does not meet the needs of children and young people in the Borough. High numbers of children are being educated in independent provision with many pupils having to travel outside the borough to access provision. This is not in their best interest and is not sustainable.

7.2 Ensuring mainstream schools are more inclusive will reduce the demand on specialist settings and out of borough provision. Remodelling specialist provision so that it better meets local need and special schools provide places for only the most complex children and young people with SEND, reducing the level of placements in independent provision.

7.3 The newly established Placement Division will visit all independent settings checking on the quality of provision, outcomes for the children and young people and attendance. They will also review the price ensuring each placement represents good value for money.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The aim of the review is to better understand the SEND population so that we can improve the quality of SEND provision within the borough, the outcomes of children and young people with SEND and encourage all our schools to become more inclusive.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Peopletoo SEND High Needs Strategic Planning Review -	Rutland House	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Ann McIntyre – Operational Director- Education, Inclusion and Provision & Operational Director - Resources
School Forum High Needs Report – 16 th January 2019	Halton website	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Education Inclusion and Provision & Operational Director Resources

