

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 12th June 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Education, Inclusion and Provision

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report updates the Board on the progress to date on expanding the SEND provision within Halton, and next steps, following receipt of a £3.3M capital allocation from the Department for Education.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) The Policy & Performance Board note the information provided.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Following notification from the Department for Education that Halton would be allocated £3.3M of capital funding (High Needs Provision Capital Allocation) to support the provision of new places or to expand existing provision for pupils and students with high needs, officers wrote to all schools to seek expressions of interest from them to offer new or additional SEND provision at their school, based against need identified within the local authority. Responses were received from nine schools initially, and seven of those expressions of interest met the need identified and were agreed for progression/consideration to the Executive Board.
- 3.2 At the Executive Board meeting on 20th April 2023, the Board agreed to progressing to statutory consultation for five schools where the SEND provision would be new provision (Saints Peter & Paul Catholic High School, Astmoor Primary School, Victoria Road Primary School, St Basil's Catholic Primary school, and Westfield Primary School), and also agreed to the expansion of provision at two further schools who already have existing SEND provision (Woodside Primary School and Oakfield Primary School), utilising the Department for Education High Needs capital funding for all of the proposed capital works. The Board also agreed to the progression of capital works at those two Halton primary schools who already offered specialist provision and were not

subject to statutory consultation (Oakfield Primary School in Widnes, and Woodside Primary School in Runcorn). Subject to final approval by the Executive Board, an initial circa 100 additional SEND places will be made available through this new provision.

- 3.3 The Board were also advised that officers were due to hold discussions with other schools in Halton with regard to the expansion of their existing SEND provision and would report back to the Executive Board accordingly. Discussions have happened at Ashley School, Widnes, and Kingsway Academy, Widnes, both of whom have offered to also expand their current SEND provision.
- 3.4 At the time of writing this report, the statutory consultation process is at a mid-point (running from 10th May 2023 and closing on 7th June 2023) and in addition to the on-line consultation, officers and Head Teachers are undertaking public consultation meetings at Saints Peter & Paul Catholic High School, Astmoor Primary School, Victoria Road Primary School, St Basil's Catholic Primary school, and Westfield Primary School, where any agreed SEND provision will be new provision.
- 3.5 Following completion of the statutory consultation, and an analysis of responses, a further report will be taken back to the Executive Board.
- 3.6 Attached as Appendix A are details of the SEND provision each school intends to offer.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed programme of works will ensure that the Council can continue to offer and expand its in-borough special educational needs provision wherever possible, helping to reduce expensive out-borough placement and transport costs, and meet need more locally within Halton.
- 4.2 The Council has a duty under the Department for Education's Special educational needs and disability code of practice 2015 to support high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN, with a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning. Through the offer of more localised specialist provision, the local authority can further build on its existing provision and continue to demonstrate the fulfilment of its duties in accordance with the code.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 All projects proposed will be funded from the High Need Provision Capital Allocation Grant allocated to the Council by the Department for Education.

- 5.2 By investing in additional SEND provision in-borough, either through expansion of existing provision, or through completely new provision at existing schools, the Council will reduce its High Needs expenditure, which is currently funded through the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a significant amount of which is currently spent on out of borough provision. It is important that preventative action is taken now to help reduce financial costs to the Council in the future, and by retaining Halton resident pupils at local provision, this will help drive down placement and travel costs for the Council longer term.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Capital Programme will support continuing demand for in-borough special educational needs provision, allowing Halton resident pupils to remain in-borough where possible.

The Strategy will also support the SEND strategic plan to increase sufficiency of inclusive, educational provision in borough. Expanding the in borough offer will also support children and young people with SEND to achieve their aspirations and achieve strong outcomes, fulfilling their potential.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

As above.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A.

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The demand for specialist support for children and young people with SEND is increasing, and places are currently limited within the borough. By expanding existing provision, and creating additional places, children can receive the support they need within the borough and help to reduce expenditure within the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The proposals meet any requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None identified.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
High Needs Provision Allocation 2022-24 Department for Education	People Directorate	Catriona Gallimore
Special educational needs and disability code of practice 2015	People Directorate	Catriona Gallimore