

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

DATE: 19th January 2026

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director of Children's Services

SUBJECT: Halton Local Area SEND Sufficiency Strategy

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People & Families

WARDS(S): Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Halton's SEND Sufficiency Strategy and deliver a presentation on the progress to date on delivering upon the priorities identified

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 The strategy be endorsed and actions to take to date be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Halton's new SEND sufficiency strategy builds on the SEND Partnership improvement plan and focuses specifically on ensuring that Halton has the right provision, in the right place, at the right time to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND locally.
- 3.2 The SEND Sufficiency Strategy aims to:
 - Assess current and projected demand for SEND provision across early years, schools, and post-16 settings.
 - Identify gaps in specialist provision and mainstream inclusion support.
 - Develop a sustainable model that prioritizes local placements, reducing reliance on out-of-borough and independent placements.
 - Improve outcomes by ensuring timely access to high-quality education, health, and care services.
- 3.3 The key drivers behind the strategy are:
 - Inspection Outcomes: The Ofsted/CQC report highlighted systemic weaknesses in planning and provision, making sufficiency a critical priority.
 - Financial Pressures: Rising costs of out-of-area placements and transport require a strategic approach to resource allocation.
 - Local Ambition: Keeping children within Halton supports stronger communities, better educational outcomes, and long-term economic benefits.

3.4 Following the development of the strategy, progress has been made through the submission of expressions of interest by schools in order to enable further in-borough SEND provision to be created. A presentation will be given at the meeting to provide an update on progress made and the next steps to enable additional provision to be in place for the 26/27 academic year.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Areas for improvement will inform policy and service development within Education, Inclusion & Provision.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Local Authority receives a SEND Capacity Capital Needs Grant from the DfE. This will be used to fund any works required to adapt buildings to enable provision to be developed. Placements within any new SEND provision will be funded through the Schools High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Enabling more children to be educated in their community, in provision suitable for their needs.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

Keeping our children local to Halton and improving their educational outcomes will build stronger communities, create better employment opportunities that will support talent within Halton to remain in Halton.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Ofsted CQC inspection findings 'widespread and/or systemic failings' has a direct and indirect effect on the lives of both current and future children and families in Halton.

As set out in our Children & Young People's Partnership Plan our ambition is for Halton's children, young people and families to be truly outstanding. The SEND Sufficiency strategy supports this ambition with commitment of partners to ensure it contributes to positive opportunities and effective help being available at the right time – enabling children and their families to make the choices that mean they can thrive and achieve.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most in Need

The SEND Sufficiency Strategy outlines the areas where provision is needed across the borough and the rationalisation in prioritising funding where it is needed most.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

There are no specific implications for the environment arising from this report.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

As set out in our Children & Young People's Partnership Plan our ambition is for Halton's children, young people and families to be truly outstanding. The SEND sufficiency strategy supports this ambition with commitment of partners to ensure it contributes to positive opportunities and effective help being available at the right time – enabling children and their families to make the choices that mean they can thrive and achieve.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no new risk implications identified emerging from the recommendations in this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues identified emerging from the recommendations in this report.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific implications for the environment arising from this report.

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

10.1 None.