

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Working Group

The process for establishing a Task and Finish Group is as follows:

1. The Select Committee identifies a topic that requires detailed consideration and examination.
2. The Select Committee Chairman and DSO complete the scoping template.
3. The Select Committee agrees membership of the Task and Finish Group.

Review Topic: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Services in Surrey.

Select Committee: Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

Relevant background:

Currently, there are 27,000 children and young people requiring SEN support and over 9,500 in receipt of an education health and care plan (EHCP) in Surrey. Outcomes for SEND children in Surrey are lower than our peers and need to improve. Feedback from children, young people and families as well as our regulators also highlight that the service needs to improve.

There has been, and continues to be, significant growth in demand both national and locally, including increases in more complex needs as well as changes to legislation which further drives demand. Surrey's diverse population and needs have resulted in higher growth than that in the underlying population. Furthermore, Surrey places twice as many children in the non-maintained and independent sector as statistical neighbours.

The combination of the factors above has led to significant financial pressures. Surrey, along with its peers has seen an increase in the number of EHCPs in 2019 leading to further financial pressures in 2019/20.

Why this is a scrutiny item

There are significant number of children within Surrey that receive support from the Council and areas within this where performance could be improved.

Furthermore, within Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture, the cost of pupils requiring SEN transport continues to rise from its 2018/19 level and in excess of this year's budget provision. This is forecast to rise further and without mitigation this would lead to an overspend of £4m on its budget.

The Council has also identified this as one of its key transformation plans.

What questions are the group aiming to answer?

1. How has the commissioning of SEND placements been successful to date in delivering the needs of service users, what are the milestones for improvement and what assurances can be provided that they will be met within a sufficient timeframe?
2. What support is provided to mainstream primary schools for the early intervention of children with SEND and is the support sufficiently publicised and resourced?
3. In terms of SEND services, how is the resource gap in the school sector being addressed, and what impact does it have on SEND services as demand continues to rise.

Aim

To provide Member-led support to the above areas of SEND services to help achieve improvements to the experience of the child and meet service targets

Objectives

- To understand key details of SEND placements including where they are placed, what form of placements and what cost there is to the Council.
- To understand what streams of work are in place to provide mainstream primary schools with support for the early intervention of children with SEND
- To confirm whether any early intervention support can be further expanded, publicised and resourced through the work of the Select Committee.
- To review any issues caused by the resource gap and the impact it has on SEND services as demand continues to rise.

Scope (within / out of)

In scope:

Strategy for Specialist Placements

Work currently in development to develop county provision

Work in development to address the increase of EHC Plans in the County

SEND Budget

Out of scope:

Home to School Transport Consultation

Outcomes for Surrey / Benefits

Options for:

- the delivery of better placement outcomes
- a better experience for the child
- value for money for the County Council

Proposed work plan

Annex 1

Timescale	Task	Responsible
October 2019	<p>Session 1</p> <p>Some children are traveling 80 miles a day, round trip, to access SEND services. First session to looking into the quadrant based model and the commissioning of SEND places.</p>	Committee Manager AD – Education AD - SEND
November 2019	<p>Session 2</p> <p>To be focused on what support is provided to mainstream primary schools for early intervention of children with SEND. To include details of the graduated approach, which was jointly developed with schools and draws on approaches that are more detailed, more frequent review and more specialist expertise to support the needs of children with special educational needs.</p>	Committee Manager AD – Vulnerable Learners & AD SEND
December 2019	<p>Session 3</p> <p>To consider the resource gap and the impact it has on SEND services as demand continues to rise.</p>	AD Finance
January 2020	Compile report to Select Committee for consideration	Committee Manager/Task Group
Potential Witnesses		
<p>Session 1 Special school head teachers Relevant Council Officers</p> <p>Session 2 SENDCos in Primary and Secondary sector Relevant Council Officers</p> <p>Session 3 Chief Executive of Schools Alliance for Excellence Chair of Schools Forum Relevant Council Officers</p>		
Useful Documents		
SEND place-planning strategic approach for a ten-year period (2019 to 2029) SEND Strategy		
Potential barriers to success (Risks / Dependencies)		
Officer and Member availability Lack of officer resources including committee support and officers with SEND expertise Lack of engagement from Members and Witnesses Number of project work streams to consider		

Equalities implications

The Working Group recognises that there are a number of considerations around equalities when conducting its work, and there are a number of people with various needs that will be contributing to this process. It will be mindful of how it conducts its work in order to ensure people are provided the opportunity to contribute, and that any barriers to doing so are mitigated.

The Group will monitor the equalities implications emerging from its recommendations with officers, and will work to identify mitigation measures for those with a potentially negative impact.

Task Group Members	Chris Botten Chris Townsend Barbara Thomson
Spokesman for the Group	To be decided at first meeting
Democratic Services	Joss Butler