CABINET – 27 October 2020

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

<u>**Members Questions**</u>

Question (1) Kay Hammond (Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow):

Please provide:

- The number of children missing education (distinguishing SEND learners from non-SEND learners) in Financial Years 2018/19 and 2019/20;
- The average time taken to arrange alternative education provision for children who were out of education in Financial Years 2018/19 and 2019/20;
- The average time taken to produce final Education Health and Care (EHC) plans and plan reviews with reference to statutory timescales in Financial Years 2018/19 and 2019/20;
- The number of upheld complaints about EHC plans and education provision from both the council and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's complaints processes in Financial Years 2018/19 and 2019/20; and
- Information and comment on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the above since the conclusion of Financial Year 2019/20.

Reply:

I would like to thank Mrs Hammond for requesting information related to children missing education and children with an education, health and care plan. This provides me with an opportunity to explain how the Council is improving its monitoring and provision for some of our most vulnerable children in Surrey.

Firstly, I should point out that the definitions used by the DFE (Department for Education) to identify and record children missing education (CME) changed in recent years.

Previously the definition included all children who were not on a school roll and included those who were receiving alternative education provision such as individual tuition provided by Access to Education (A2E).

The current DfE definition for CME relates to those pupils **who are not receiving any education and not on a school roll**, for instance, those who have moved into the County and are awaiting a school place.

Children who are receiving tuition and/or attending alternative provision should now be recorded as Educated Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS) and not counted as CME.

The Council's recording until this Academic Year did not reflect this change in DfE definition. That has now been corrected, which means that we are better able to see the true picture of children who are not accessing any education, as well as those who are receiving education but not in a school environment.

As a result of this, our historical data related to children missing education is inflated. However, the data does reflect all children not on a school roll for whom we monitored and targeted support over the course of Academic Years 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Possible reasons for pupils to be out of school				
CME – with no school place	Medical needs	EOTAS	Access to Education (A2E)	Possible CME under investigation

- *The number of children missing education (distinguishing SEND learners from non-SEND learners) in Academic Years 2018/19 and 2019/20.*

As explained, the Council previously recorded all pupils without a registered school place as CME, reflecting earlier DfE definitions.

Figures reflect all pupils who have been logged as awaiting placement at some point during the academic year. The 2019/20 figure is also inflated by the inclusion that year of pupils who had come off roll from independent schools at the end of the academic year and whose next placement was being followed up (approximately 65 pupils).

While our historic data does not differentiate between children missing education and children receiving education while not on a school role, our practice experience is that most of the children recorded as CME were in receipt of alternative education provision.

Pupils awaiting placement during the academic year	2018/19				2019/20			
Current SEN status	**EHCP**	**SEN Support**	**None**	**TOTAL**	**EHCP**	**SEN Support**	**None**	**TOTAL**
Total no. of pupils	250	136	303	**689**	226	96	540**	**862****

**As per the note above, this figure is inflated by approximately 65 pupils

- *The average time taken to arrange alternative education provision for children who were out of education in Academic Years 2018/19 and 2019/20.*

This data is based on an analysis by calendar days rather than school days. This means that, where pupils have been awaiting placement across a holiday period, the days on which schools were closed have been included.

As children may be awaiting placement across two different academic years, the pupil numbers below will not fully align with the data above which counts these pupils in both years in which they were awaiting placement.

Analysed by academic year (AY) in which awaiting placement episode started:

Awaiting placement – AY of start date	Total number of children	Average number of calendar days
AY 2018/19	554	69.6
AY 2019/20	747	64.9

- ***The average time taken to produce final Education Health and Care (EHC) plans and plan reviews with reference to statutory timescales in Academic Years 2018/19 and 2019/20.***

EHCPs

As shown in Graph 1 below, EHCP timeliness for the full year to end of August 2019 (the 2018/19 academic year) was 62%.

For the 2019/20 period, 50% of EHCPs (Education Health and Care Plans) were issued on time. However, as the month by month data in Graph 2 shows, this reflects a decline in performance at the start of the academic year followed by a continuous and sustained improvement from April 2020 onwards.

Graph 1: EHCP timeliness over a rolling 12-month period
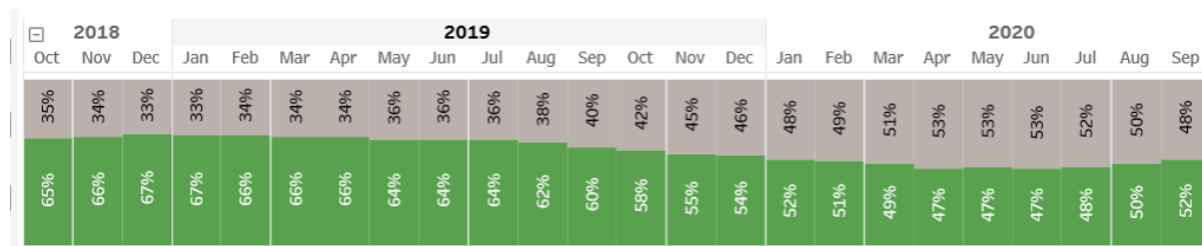
**Graph 2:** EHCP timeliness by month in which plan was due
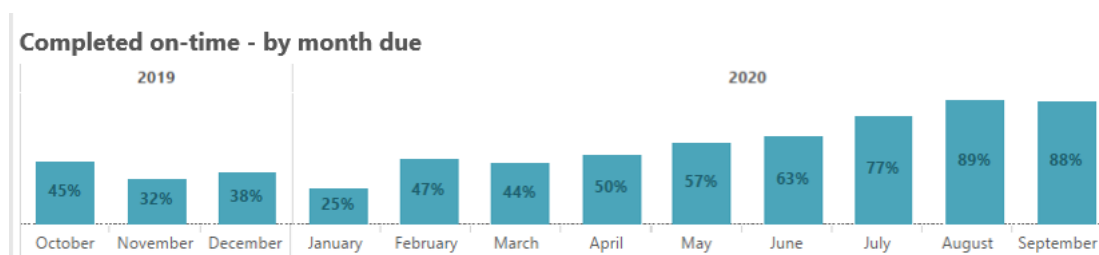
Current timeliness for September 2020 is 88%.

Annual reviews

At the end of the 2019/20 Academic Year, 64% of pupils with an EHCP had an up to date annual review, with a further 3% up to date but due within the next month (67%). This is shown in Figure 1 below.

Detailed monitoring of this data was not in place at the end of the 18/19 academic year.

Figure 1: EHCP annual review timeliness – end of August 2020

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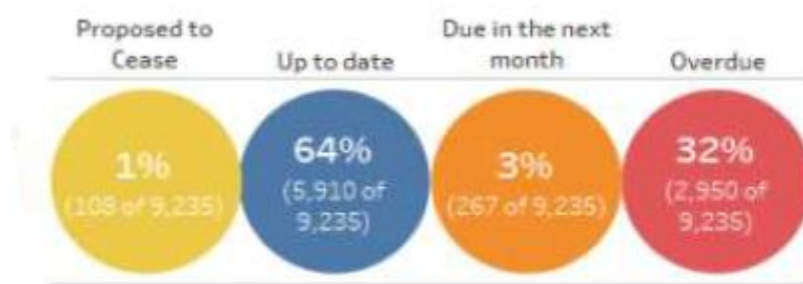
Performance is currently 65% on time and 4% due in the next month (69%), demonstrating further improvement into the current academic year, as illustrated by Figure 2.

Figure 2: EHCP annual review timeliness – end of September 2020
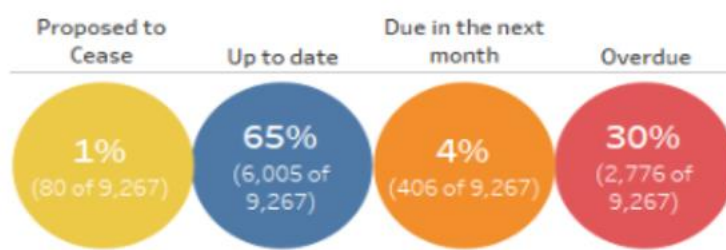
- ***The number of upheld complaints about EHC plans and education provision from both the council and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's complaints processes in Financial Years 2018/19 and 2019/20;***

There were six upheld complaints to the LGSCO in 2018/19 in relation to SEND and four upheld complaints in 2019/20.

The Council also received 106 complaints with regards to practice in the SEND area teams in 2018/19. In 2019/20, this figure was 238. Since April 2020, over the six months, the Council has received 56 complaints related to SEND practice.

We are unable to distinguish which of these complaints specifically relate to EHCPs in those years, however our recording systems have now changed to allow more detailed analysis of the nature of complaints.

- ***Information and comment on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the above since the conclusion of Financial Year 2019/20.***

COVID – 19 has affected the EHCP process in several ways:

- Increased partnership working across the County resulted in multi-agency risk assessments of all young people who are vulnerable – with an EHCP and/or known to social care;
- A reduction in the number of requests for an EHC Assessments;
- The application of our best endeavours which meant assessments were undertaken virtually and that Annual reviews were carried out using Zoom and Teams;
- Overall, our performance on EHCP timeliness has improved and this improvement has been sustained over August and September 2020;
- We have seen increased levels of anxiety amongst parents and young people and have commissioned support from the voluntary sector KOOTH which provides support to young people and QWELL which provides support to parents;
- In addition, training has been provided to school staff and their services to enable them to support young people who are anxious;
- *C*OVID- 19 has seen staff work in creative ways to deliver services to young people;
- Partnership working between the Council's education and social care teams and schools to ensure our vulnerable young people were encouraged to attend school resulted in the following attendance performance:

Children with an allocated social worker		Children with an EHCP	
SURREY	35%	SURREY	23%
NATIONAL	11%	NATIONAL	16%

Next steps

- Embedding new practice to reflect the revised DfE definition of CME and building new Tableau dashboards to monitor this and all other groups of pupils out of school.
- Ongoing training and support for staff to support these practice changes.
- Analysis of time taken to place pupils based on school days rather than calendar days.
- Stage 1 complaints are returning to the service and staff are being given training on effective complaint management.
- Co-production meetings with parents have been introduced to the EHCP process, the outcome of which is intended to reduce complaints.

Mrs Julie Iles
Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning
27 October 2020

Question (2) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):

In line with Surrey County Council's agreed Climate Change Strategy please can you confirm that the Cabinet is committed to requiring all decision making items to be subject to an Environmental Sustainability Assessment, completed by an appropriately qualified officer, to ensure that our climate commitment is mainstreamed into action across all of the council departments.

Reply:

While reports to Cabinet already require the completion of Environmental Sustainability Assessments for investment and programmes which meet certain criteria, the Council is committed to doing more to ensure climate change is embedded within our decision making processes. To that end, the Climate Change Board has been established and is chaired by the Executive Director for Environment, Transport and Infrastructure, with representation from senior officers across the Council. The purpose of the Board is to embed a more sustainable approach to developing idea, projects and services corporately with a focus on carbon reduction.

The Council is also currently refreshing our Organisation Strategy (2021-2026). This Strategy will inform how we deliver services to align with our 2030 Community Vision. The Strategy focuses on the Council's key priorities, of which Enabling a Greener Future is one. This approach will help to ensure that climate change is considered in all strategic and investment decisions across all council departments.

Mrs Natalie Bramhall
Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change
27 October 2020

Question (3) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):

The refreshed Organisation Strategy proposes one guiding principle, to tackle inequality in Surrey by focusing on 'no-one being left behind'. It encompasses economic and health inequalities along with the protected equality characteristics (of age, disability, race, sexual

orientation, sex, gender reassignment, religion or belief (or lack thereof), whether in marriage or civil partnerships or caring responsibilities) which are already included in the council's Equality Impact Assessments.

Please confirm:

- to what extent the effectiveness of the current EIA process will be reviewed and refreshed in line with this new strategy; and

- what the process will be to ensure our decisions reduce health and economic inequalities going forward?

Reply:

Our commitment to making sure we leave no-one behind is not new. It is a central part of the Community Vision for Surrey in 2030 which we worked with residents and partners to develop two years ago. Tackling inequality and ensuring no one is left behind has also been a feature of our Organisation Strategy from previous years. The refreshed Strategy presented to Cabinet today reaffirms our commitment to tackling inequality as the guiding principle for everything we do, as well as setting new equality objectives that include reducing health and economic inequalities.

Many people who choose to call Surrey home are thriving in our towns and villages, but sadly that is not the case for everyone. Inequality is a strong theme that runs through our evidence and insight about the experiences of our residents and communities. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, we knew there was significant economic disparity between east and west Surrey and inequalities between communities that affect the health, wellbeing and life chances of some of Surrey's residents. The pandemic is likely to have made these inequalities worse, and we are starting to better understand the implications for residents and businesses.

As part of our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, we already consider evidence on differential impacts for people from different socio-economic backgrounds. While this is not defined as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, I place just as much importance on knowing how our decisions may affect communities where factors such as deprivation, low incomes or child poverty feature. We will be looking at our process to consider how else we might test the impact any propositions on health and economic inequalities and I would welcome views from Members on how we do this.

In addition to making EIAs as robust as possible, we will be doing more to ensure we have the best possible evidence and insight so we can make better decisions on addressing health and economic inequalities. For example, our Community Impact Assessment work is lifting a lid on the impact of Covid-19 on our communities. We are also working on an outcomes-based performance framework for the Organisation Strategy that will measure our progress towards reducing inequalities across Surrey.

How we use insight and engage with all residents to understand differences in experience is just one way we will tackle inequality. The guiding principle in Organisation Strategy will influence all parts of the council, including:

- how we design the organisation and services to be as inclusive and accessible as possible
- how we support all residents to be more active in their communities and participate in the democratic process

- and how our staff are supported so they can provide a first-class service to anyone in Surrey.

These are the right things to do to develop better services, enable better outcomes and use our resources most effectively.

Mr Tim Oliver
Leader of the Council
27 October 2020

Question (4) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):

Please confirm what additional resources are currently being provided to ensure that all school children in Surrey are still able to receive cycle proficiency training and confirm that social distancing requirements do not affect our commitment to provide this as a universal provision.

Reply:

Impact on Courses Types and Delivery
Surrey County Council provides several different cycle training courses. Each of these has been subject to a COVID-19 risk assessment (with reference to the national Bikeability Trust COVID-19 guidelines where applicable). For some types of course where social distancing is not possible, the course provision has been suspended. For other types of course the provision has continued but with a reduced number of students to instructors so that social distancing can be managed safely. Schools can request more courses to compensate for this. Consequently, the council is scheduling more courses to train the same number of pupils, subject to cycling instructor availability. A summary of our courses and how the delivery of the course has been affected by COVID-19 is described below in Table 1.

Increasing Instructor Availability
The service currently employs 61 cycling instructors as bank staff with a few on annualised hours contracts. To meet the increased demand for courses the service has recruited an additional 13 cycling instructors since March. In that time six cycling instructors have left. Further recruitment is planned in cohorts to facilitate putting them through the qualification programme.

It does take some time to bring new cycling instructors into full production after they have been taken on as Surrey employees. This is because there is classroom and practical training with further 'on the job' experience within the national framework before reaching full qualification.

The recruitment of additional cycling instructors has been possible due to an additional £200,000 that the council allocated to the cycle training service for this financial year prior to COVID-19. This additional investment had originally been intended to reduce the fees to schools (usually passed onto parents) to assist in expanding the service to reach more pupils throughout the county. We had also hoped to introduce a new "Independent Cycling to Secondary School" course. Instead, for now, the additional funding has been used to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and the introduction of this new course has been delayed. However, it has been possible to maintain the lower fees, and this has assisted in maintaining the demand for the courses.

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Impact on the Number of Courses and Trainees

Table 2 below describes the total number of courses and pupils in the last academic year in the period from September to the end of March (prior to the national lockdown when all cycle training courses were suspended), compared with the number of courses that we have scheduled for same period during the current academic year. The total number of pupils and courses has reduced because we have had to suspend the "Pedals" and "Learn to Ride" courses as it is not possible to ensure social distancing. However, we have increased the number of courses for Bikeability Level 1 and Bikeability Level 2 and this has led to an increase in the number of pupils scheduled to take the Bikeability Level 1 course. Despite an increase in the number of Level 2 courses the pupil numbers have dropped due to a lower number of pupils being allowed to be on each course to ensure social distancing. Consequently, the impact is greater on Level 2 because, being a longer course over five days, it is harder for schools to fit in extra courses and harder for the council to find the additional cycling instructor capacity.

Future Aspirations

A positive impact of COVID-19 is that the reduction in the number of pupils on each course has resulted in higher quality training for the students. For Level 2 courses in particular, this has resulted in there being time for pupils to practice making a journey, for example, to a prospective secondary school, under supervision. This provides pupils with greater confidence to encourage them to continue cycling for everyday journeys after the course. In the long-term therefore, the council aspires to maintain the smaller number of pupils on each course.

There is a commitment from central government in its recent "Gear Change A Bold Vision for Cycling and Walking" document for an increase in the provision of cycle training. The hope and expectation is that this will result in more funding being provided to local authorities to support more cycle training. If this is the case, this will allow us to increase the quantity as well as maintain the benefits of the higher quality courses in the future.

Table 1: The different types of cycle training courses and the outcome of the COVID-19 risk assessments

Course	Description	Length	Maximum trainees pre-COVID-19	Maximum riders under COVID-19 risk assessment
Pedals	Years 1 and 2 basic road safety course in the playground for children on bikes, scooters and foot	1 hour	15 trainees with 2 Instructors	Service suspended – social distancing is not possible on this course
Bikeability Level 1	Year 4 balance and control skills in the playground	3 hours on one day	15 trainees with 2 Instructors	12 trainees with 2 Instructors
Bikeability Level 2	Year 6 cycling on roads with generally moderate traffic flows	7.5 hours over 5 days	8 trainees with 2 instructors	6 trainees with 2 instructors

Course	Description	Length	Maximum trainees pre-COVID-19	Maximum riders under COVID-19 risk assessment
Learn to Ride for under 18s	Any school age, for complete beginners	2 hours	1 trainee per Instructor, maximum number on course depends on space available	Service suspended – social distancing is not possible on this course
Holiday courses at fire stations	Demand has generally been for Level 1 and Level 2	According to course	According to course	Service suspended due to risk of introducing COVID-19 at fire stations
Private training for Surrey residents	All ages, according to the need of the customer	Generally 2.5 hours	Generally one-to-one	Suspended as lone working not permitted
Independent cycling to secondary school	New programme planned for this academic year	2 hours	3 trainees with 1 Instructor	Start delayed due to administrative and Instructor capacity

Table 2: The numbers of cycle training courses and pupils scheduled for the current academic year from September to March, compared with the same period last year

	September 2019 to 23 March 2020		September 2020 to 23 March 2021 (as scheduled 21 October 2020)	
Course	**Number of Courses**	**Total Number of trainees**	**Number of Courses**	**Total Number of trainees**
Pedals	107	1,420	0	0
Bikeability Level 1	128	1,924	199	2,108
Bikeability Level 2	379	3,234	418	2,456
Learn to Ride	25	64	0	0
Total	639	6,642	617	4,564

Mr Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Transport
27 October 2020

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