



Monday, 18 October 2021

Update on the SEND Transformation Programme and Implementation of the Recommendations of the SEND Task Group**Purpose of report:**

To provide the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee with a progress update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transformation programme, including relevant progress updates about the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Task Group. This report builds on the Select Committee Report from December 2020 as well as the Cabinet Report from February 2021.

Introduction

1. In October 2019, the CFLC Select Committee established a SEND Task Group to review the provision of SEND places, the support available for early intervention and the resourcing available for SEND services. The findings and recommendations of the Task Group were presented to Cabinet in March 2020 and were accepted. The December 2020 Select Committee Report provides a full progress and implementation overview.
2. This report provides an overview of the progress and delivery of the SEND Transformation Programme, highlighting key achievements and deliverables through 2020-21, aspirations along with key deliverables and milestones anticipated through programme delivery in 2021-22.

Background

3. The SEND transformation programme is aligned with Surrey's Community Vision 2030, which seeks to realise the Council's ambition that everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them to succeed in life.
4. The SEND Transformation Programme is underpinned by our SEND Partnership Strategy 2019-2022 which sets out the ambition to improve long-term outcomes for children and young people through education closer to home and the right support at the right time so that children and young people who have additional needs can live, learn, and grow up locally and achieve their full potential. The wider strategy ambitions are set out as follows:

Early joined up identification, response, and provision

As children's needs are identified and met at the earliest possible stage, children should have access to the right provision to reach their potential and demand for long term statutory support reduces.

Children thriving in their local communities

With most children attending their local mainstream school with the right help and support and enough special maintained provision for those who need it, children should be able to live at home with their family.

Better experiences for children and families

By providing children and families with the right information and advice and making the system easier for them, children and families should receive a consistently good quality service.

Financial sustainability and better use of resources

Based on current assumptions, our focus on improving outcomes and value for money, joint commissioning and decision-making should ensure that the high needs grant funding available will be sufficient to meet children's needs within 5 years without the additional reliance of a general fund contribution. These assumptions will be reviewed and revised as necessary following the outcome of the SEND Review and the introduction of any new Ofsted SEND Inspection Framework.

5. The SEND Transformation is a holistic and far-reaching programme, and it incorporates activity across the Local Area SEND system alongside the activity necessary to discharge our SEND Written Statement of Action (later called the Accelerated Progress Plan). The programme is structured in a thematic way to aid delivery and encompasses four key areas of focus:
 - **Inclusion in local maintained schools:** Increasing the proportion of children able to thrive in a mainstream or specialist-maintained provision closer to home along with their peers and siblings.
 - **Sufficiency, outcomes, and value of school places:** Ensuring that the school estate provides sufficient, suitable places for children with Special Education Needs and Disability within the county, improving the value of independent places that are used through partnership and market management and reviewing the school funding model within maintained provision to ensure funds are allocated as efficiently and effectively as possible.
 - **Preparation for Adulthood:** Supporting post 16 children in preparing for adulthood through more and better educational pathways and support for independence.
 - **Partnership Accountability:** Ensuring all partners across the local area, including Council departments and local providers are working effectively together to support improvements in outcome, experience, and sustainability of the SEND system in Surrey.

Key Achievements in 2020-21

6. During 2020-21 there were significant achievements across the transformation programme. We were able to ensure sustained progress against the backdrop of the pandemic, and notably the Department for Education formally recognised sufficient progress against our Accelerated Progress Plan. We were able to sign-off from any further formal monitoring arrangements at the end of 2020 as a result.
7. In their notification letter discharging the Accelerated Progress Plan, the Department for Education acknowledged that the sustained improvement made *'comes as the result of a great deal of commitment and hard work on the part of the local authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group, families and front-line staff across education, health and social care'*. They also stated that they were *'aware that local authorities are facing unprecedented pressures arising from the Covid-19 crisis and that these improvements have been made against an extremely challenging backdrop'*.
8. Operational improvements also took effect across the Local Authority with a visible impact on the quality of service delivery. For example, 70% EHCP completed to target timeframe, an increase from 48% in February 2020 and against a national average of 60%. Subsequently this has risen to a cumulative rolling timeliness of 78% in August 2021. The timeliness of annual reviews has risen to 84% in August 2021 from 61% in March 2021. The introduction of four new Assistant Directors in the Quadrant Teams will further strengthen our work to improve practice, the quality of communication and planning and will strengthen connections with schools, settings and other partners in the quadrants. These new senior leaders will work alongside their colleagues in social care to ensure that we strengthen holistic planning for children and families.
9. We have developed a new All Age Autism Strategy which was coproduced with service users including children, young people, parents, and carers. Young people with autism make up approximately a third of all children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These young people using our services, along with professionals, helped to co-produce the All-Age Autism Strategy and a widescale consultation informed the final design. The strategy is being launched this September to drive better experiences and develop more inclusive communities across Surrey, creating opportunities and pathways for employment and support for children and adults.
10. A new Graduated Response Service and Learners' Single Point of Access (LSPA) were introduced. This new LSPA has enabled families and professionals to connect more easily to help and support, with many issues now resolved at the first contact. This compliments a new 'team around the school' model being piloted in the North East of the County which will be rolled out across the County during 2021-22.

11. A schools-led Inclusion Roundtable took shape in April 2021 made up of 55 Head Teachers and Academy Trust CEOs. This has provided focus and sector leadership to our inclusive schools approach. The Chair of the Inclusion Roundtable Alex Russell (CEO of Borne Education Trust) provided this quote to include in the schools funding consultation 2022/23 *“the group’s remit to present an ambitious vision for high-quality, inclusive education for all will require school and system leaders to think and prioritise differently. We need to think beyond the traditional measures of success and come together as one so that we are united behind these aims.”*. The consultation proposes a transfer of funding from schools to support innovative school-led approaches.
12. An Alliance of providers was awarded a new contract for a transformed and high-quality emotional wellbeing and mental health (EWMH) service. This contract went live on 1 April 2021 and supports our work to improve the experiences and outcomes for children with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs, these children make up 15% of all children with a statutory plan (EHCP).
13. Within the Preparation for Adulthood project, there has been an emphasis on improving the opportunities and pathways to independence and employment for young people. There has been focused attention on joint planning with Adult Social Care, health and education; and we were able to achieve a 13% increase in placements relating to life skills and employment pathways. Work also began on changing the way educational placements are made, where possible, enabling young people to move back to Surrey to receive their educational support near to their families, friends, and local community.
14. Our capital investment programme delivered a large number of schemes to increase places in September 2021 by 290. This is the second year of a four-year programme. Further school places are being developed for September 2022 and September 2023. Annex 1 lists the school provision created and includes a new special school that opened on 1 September (Foxgrove Academy) as part of the Howard Partnership Trust. Modelling is undertaken using two external specialist organisations to ensure that there is robust data available for forward sufficiency planning.
15. In March 2021 our Alternative Provision Strategy and approach were agreed alongside a commitment to ensure that the estate was fit for purpose with a capital investment of £22.7m. The new strategy was widely consulted upon and informed by children and young people who were existing or previous users of the service. The emphasis of the new strategy is to provide alternative pathways back into mainstream education. It incorporates an enhanced outreach offer to schools.
16. In the latter part of 2020-21 we commissioned IMPOWER to provide a trajectory management tool as a means of supporting strategic financial planning to address the deficit position resulting from the continued shortfall in Designated Schools Grant High Needs Block (DSG HNB) funding and demand.
17. IMPOWER were also commissioned during this time to undertake a rapid stocktake of the SEND transformation programme based on their work to date

with other local authorities and to ensure we were taking every opportunity to honestly reflect and accelerate progress. This was undertaken between February – March 2021.

18. IMPOWER reported that the conditions for success are in place and solid foundations have been built within SCC and across the system. They made additional recommendations to accelerate the programme in relation to early intervention, casework practice and enhancing the impact of system leadership and collective ambition through a renewed communications strategy and approach.

Current Progress and Key Milestones and Deliverables for 2021-22

19. Work began in April to respond to IMPOWER's findings, the majority having now been completed or due to be completed within the next 6 months.
20. Within Inclusion in Mainstream there is a significant level of transformation and improvement activity underway in this area, including the development of an Inclusion Statement with partners through the Inclusion Roundtable, developing an inclusion toolkit and skill strategy for schools. Prototyping and piloting of the 'Team around the School' model is also underway as well as developing and transforming the Speech, Language and Communication skills and the Social, Emotional and Mental Health offer. This is alongside the implementation and embedding of the All-Age Autism Strategy and new CAMHS offer.
21. Through the Sufficiency and Value programme the programme team are progressing 27 approved projects that will create up to 1,600 new specialist school places in Surrey for a combined capital investment of £79.6m. 21 of the 27 live and approved projects in Phases 1, 2 and 3 are currently running to agreed programme delivery timescales and more than 290 new specialist school places were available from September 2021. The first full year effect of this investment is approximately £8.25m reduced revenue expenditure. Similar numbers are projected for September 2022 from existing approved programmes. A further £3m saving is being targeted for the coming year through market management approaches within the independent sector.
22. In addition, the latest version of the National Schools and College Contract has now been implemented with all independent providers. These are model standard contracts recommended by the Association of Directors of Children's Services. These contracts enable robust contract management of these providers and monitoring of their service delivery.
23. Following a review of Home to School Transport over the past year the Transport Assistance Team who are responsible for approving eligibility moved from Admissions into the Transport Coordination Team in May 2021. This change means the teams will be able to work more closely and therefore speed up the processing of applications, arranging transport and in turn hopefully reducing complaints. The service is also launching our Independent Travel Training

service in September (subject to Covid restrictions) as we move the service from a Home to School Transport service to a Transport Assistance service.

24. As part of the Preparation for Adulthood programme the focus has been on identifying and supporting a group of young people whose outcomes could be improved by moving back into Surrey for September 2021. This work will now be extended to a wider group of young people by consent. Placement changes will only take place following careful consultation and agreement with families and/or the young person themselves. A joint review with Health of continuing care cases is also being taken forward to ensure no young person experiences a break in provision as they move from children's to adult health services.
25. The programme team has also expanded the apprenticeship offer to include seven placements within Surrey County Council and has established a Communication and Engagement Working Group with representation from Family Voice, our parent partnership. Scope and direction for prototyping new ways of working for Children with Disabilities and Transition Team have also been agreed for implementation.
26. Partnership Accountability: Some extremely positive work is underway with partners through the SEND System Partnership Board. Partners have recently highlighted and shared their experiences of an emerging culture shift evidenced by a renewed level of trust and far more collaborative relationship with the Council and partners.
27. The work being taken forward in the Inclusion in Mainstream through the 'Team around the School' approach and the Surrey Leaders Inclusion Round Table is also supporting this system wide cultural change. In addition, approximately 80 head teachers have participated in the Whole School SEND Leadership Programme.
28. In addition, as part of our partnership commitment with Health a joint commissioning strategy is being developed between education, health, and care to underpin the longer-term activity to improve outcomes for children, this will be ready for implementation early in 2022.
29. Engagement with the parent carer forum Family Voice continues to be further developed through regular monthly meetings attended jointly by Council and Health colleagues. The focus of these meetings is to ensure timely and accurate information sharing with parents and carers in Surrey.
30. At an overarching programme level, we have recently expanded our leadership and programme capacity to deliver our improvement and transformation activity. At the beginning of the 2021/22 Academic year, we will reaffirm the quadrant-based model with the introduction of four Assistant Directors of Inclusion and Additional Needs. The Quadrant AD roles will provide important leadership capacity to bring together our three key transformation priorities (SEND, Safeguarding and Wellbeing). They will play an important role in our school community and support our learners to achieve better outcomes through support and challenge in our settings.

31. We have also recruited programme and senior project managers funded through new transformation funding to drive our key SEND transformation priorities. This new programme capacity will work with existing programme managers to drive programme delivery across all four key areas.
32. In respect of our Local Area Partnership a refreshed Self Evaluation is being drawn together over the coming months with oversight from the SEND Partnership. The self evaluation will include an assessment about how well the Local Area achieves outcomes and delivers in line with the SEND Code of Practice. This will enable us to refine our local area improvement plan and SEND strategy. We anticipate that there will be a new SEND Inspection Framework released in 2022 and this activity will put us in a strong position as we move towards our second SEND area Inspection from Ofsted and CQC, this is likely to take place no earlier than Autumn 2022. The initial Self Evaluation will be completed in December with an overview presented to the Transformation Board. This will enable the Local Area Partnership to respond to the headline findings from January 2022.

Financial Position and Deficit Recovery

33. The financial pressures on the DSG and High Needs Block (HNB) continue to be a key focus of the Transformation programme. At the end of 20/21, following a year end overspend of £34.5m, the cumulative deficit on the HNB now stands at £83m with an overall DSG deficit balance of £63.7m when offsetting other block surpluses.
34. The 2021/22 budget contains an assumed overspend of £23.8m which is matched by a General Fund contribution to the offsetting reserve. Previous assumptions within the MTFs are that this annual deficit will begin to reduce by £5.3m per annum to achieve a balanced in-year budget within 5 years. The IMPOWER trajectory model will support the Council's 'twin track' approach to financial planning and will enable us to review the planning assumption with greater certainty.
35. As well as the work on future projections, the assurance processes put in place during 20/21 around the in-year financial position remain. This includes fortnightly meetings to review changes in placements, tribunal decisions and other impacts which may result in a change to the forecast. Meeting with this regularity has allowed officers to identify changes before the regular monitoring timetable and work through any implications. There is also a risk that SEND demand continues to increase post Covid leading to further spend, this is also monitored at the fortnightly meetings along with plans to mitigate the growth.

Conclusion

36. The service has now completed two years of a transformation journey and the SEND transformation programme is moving into the next phase of delivery with a focus on building system-wide momentum and maximum impact on children's

outcomes, demand for services, and financial trajectories over the next five years.

37. It is recognised that delivery will not be straightforward due to the complexities of the system, but with the arrival of permanent Assistant Directors there will be a strengthened focus on accelerating delivery through culture change and practice; further building an inclusive ambition across the SEND system partnership.
38. We are also aware that working in partnership is essential, we are therefore evolving how we work with partners at operational and strategic levels, working collaboratively and putting proportionate governance and reporting mechanisms in place to help us to collectively achieve our goals.

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Sources/background papers

Report on SEND Taskforce Recommendations:

[Surrey County Council - Agenda for Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee on Monday, 14 December 2020, 10.00 am \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Send Transformation Report to Cabinet:

[Cabinet Report SEND Transformation- Final.pdf \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Surrey Community Vision 2030:

[Community vision for Surrey in 2030 - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

SEND Partnership Strategy:

[SEND\SEND System Partnership Strategy\Surrey SEND Partnership strategy 2019-22.pdf](#)

Letter from Department for Education regarding the Discharge of the Accelerated Progress Plan

[DfE Letter - Surrey - APP Discharge Notification Letter January 2021.pdf](#)

Annex 1: Surrey County Council SEND Capital Programme: Current Approved Projects 2019-2021

Placement name	Placement Type	SEN Need-Type	School Designation	Phase of Education	Quadrant	District/Borough	Project	Total additional places	Target Delivery of works	Status
Woodfield School	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary 11-16 years	SE	Reigate & Banstead	Secondary Bulge Class	10	Sept 2019	Delivered
Linden Bridge Academy	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Complex Social Communication Needs	All Through 4-16 years	SE	Epsom & Ewell	Primary Bulge Class	8	Sept 2019	Delivered
Philip Southcote School	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary & Post 16 11-19 years	NW	Runnymede	Secondary Bulge Class	10	Sept 2019	Delivered
Freemantles School	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Complex Social Communication Needs	All Through 4-19 years	NW	Woking	Secondary Bulge Class	16	Sept 2019	Delivered
Pond Meadow Academy	Special School	Severe Learning Difficulties	Severe Learning Difficulties	All Through 2-19 years	SW	Guildford	Secondary Bulge Class	14	Sept 2019	Delivered
Brooklands School, Wray Park site	Special School	Severe Learning Difficulties	Severe Learning Difficulties	Primary 2-11 years	SE	Reigate & Banstead	Primary Bulge Class	8	Sept 2019	Delivered
Walton Leigh School	Special School	Severe Learning Difficulties	Severe Learning Difficulties	Secondary 11-16 years	NE	Elmbridge	Secondary Bulge Class	11	Sept 2019	Delivered
Bell Farm Primary School	SEN Unit/ Resourced Provision	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	Primary 4-11 years	NE	Elmbridge	New SEN Unit	22	Sept 2020	Delivered

Worplesdon Primary School	SEN Unit/ Resourced Provision	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	Primary 4-11 years	SW	Guildford	New SEN Unit	21	Sept 2020	Delivered
Brooklands School, Alexander Road site	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Complex Social Communication Needs	Primary 4-11 years	SE	Reigate & Banstead	Special School Expansion	70	Feb 2022	Contract
Freemantles School	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Complex Social Communication Needs	All Through 4-19 years	NW	Woking	Special School Expansion	72	Nov 2022	Planning
Meadhurst Academy	SEN Unit/ Resourced Provision	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	Primary 4-11 years	NE	Spelthorne	Redesignation from SLCN to ASD and Expansion	29	Part 1 Sept 2021 Part 2 Sept 2022	Delivered Feasibility
Fox Grove Academy	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Complex Social Communication Needs	All Through 4-19 years	SE	Mole Valley	DfE Delivery: new Special Free School	152	Nov 2021	Contract
Betchworth Vale Academy	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	All Through 4-19 years	SE	Mole Valley	DfE Delivery: new Special Free School	180	Sept 2023	Design
SCC ASD Special School West of County	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	All Through 4-19 years	NW	TBC	New Special Free School	200	Sept 2024	Feasibility
Limpsfield Grange School (Girls only)	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	Secondary & Post 16 11-19 years	SE	Tandridge	Special School Expansion (Post 16)	40	Oct 2022	Feasibility
Sunnydown School (Boys only)	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	Secondary 11-16 years	SE	Tandridge	Special School Refurbishment	4	April 2021	Delivered

Placement name	Placement Type	SEN Need-Type	School Designation	Phase of Education	Quadrant	District/Borough	Project	Total additional places	Target Delivery of works	Status
Woodfield School	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary 11-16 years	SE	Reigate & Banstead	Special School Expansion	60	Sept 2022	Planning
The Abbey Academy	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary 11-16 years	SW	Waverley	Special School Expansion	60	June 2023	Planning
Three Rivers Academy	SEN Unit/Resourced Provision	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	Secondary 11-16 years	NE	Elmbridge	New SEN Unit	30	Jan 2023	Feasibility
Philip Southcote School (Main site)	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary 11-19 years	NW	Runnymede	Special School Expansion	26	Jan 2023	Planning
Philip Southcote School at The Meads	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary 16-19 years	NW	Runnymede	Relocation of Post 16	30	Sept 2021	Delivered
Philip Southcote at Chertsey High School	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary 11-16 years	NW	Runnymede	Special School Expansion – new satellite site	20	Sept 2021	Delivered
Philip Southcote at Kings International College	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary 11-16 years	NW	Surrey Heath	Special School Expansion – new satellite site	20	Sept 2021	Delivered
Chandlers Field School	SEN Unit/Resourced Provision	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	Primary 4-11 years	NE	Elmbridge	New SEN Unit	25	Oct 2021	Contract
Bramley Oak Academy	Special School	Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs	Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs	Primary 5-11 years	SW	Guildford	Special School Expansion	49	Sept 2023	Feasibility

West Hill Academy	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Primary 4-11 years	SE	Mole Valley	Special School Expansion	30	Part 1 Sept 2021 Part 2 Sept 2022	Delivered Contract
Manor Mead School at Virginia Water	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Communication & Interaction Needs	Primary 4-11 years	NE	Spelthorne	2 year Temporary Expansion	60	Part 1 Sept 2021 Part 2 Sept 2022	Delivered Feasibility
Wishmore Cross Academy	Special School	Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs	Social, Emotional & Mental Health Needs	Primary & Secondary 7-16 years	NW	Surrey Heath	Special School Expansion	28	Sept 2021	Delivered
The Park Academy	Special School	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Learning & Additional Needs	Secondary 11-16 years	NW	Woking	Special School	2	Sept 2021	Delivered
Fox Grove Academy	Special School	Autism and Communication & Interaction Needs	Complex Social Communication Needs	All Through 4-19 years	NE	Elmbridge	Temporary Accommodation while DfE Scheme is delivered	64	Sept 2021	Delivered
Total addition planned places from approved projects to date:								1,441		