

26th July 2021

Agenda Item: 8

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES PLACE PLANNING STRATEGY 2021-2026

Purpose of the Report

1. The report invites the Committee to consider the Nottinghamshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Place Planning Strategy for 2021-2026, attached as **Appendix 1**, and recommend it to Policy Committee for approval. Committee is also asked to agree that annual reports on progress with the implementation of the Strategy should be provided for consideration by the Children and Young People's Committee.
2. The report also asks the Committee to agree that the Chairman of the Committee writes to the Department of Education regarding the relatively low level of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities related funding for Nottinghamshire.

Information

3. Nottinghamshire has a long-term commitment to inclusion, resulting in most children and young people with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities receiving their education in local mainstream settings and accessing resources without the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
4. Following the Children and Families Act (2014), there has been a significant increase in the demand for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities services and provision, as well as the need to support some young people until the age of 25 years. The increasing demand for services especially specialist educational provision has in turn placed considerable pressure on the funding for Special Educational Needs which is provided to local authorities through the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).
5. Between 2017-2018 and 2021-2022, the High Needs Block budget increased from £59.641m to £89.070m, which is a 49.3% increase over the period. However, over the same period expenditure on specialist educational placements increased by 61.7%. This increase in expenditure is reflected in the funding of an additional 510 specialist educational placements between January 2016 and January 2021. The number of specialist educational placements increased from 1,273 to 1,783 placements, or by 40.0%. Independent providers accounted for 60.0% of these additional placements. The overall

proportion of independent placements increased from 22.6% to just over 33.3% between January 2017 and January 2021.

6. The average costs per year of the different types of specialist provision is currently as below:

• Nottinghamshire Special Schools	£23,596
• Independent / Independent Schools	£48,132
• Alternative Provision	£26,813
• Post 16 Specialist Colleges	£12,028

7. The analysis in the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Place Planning Strategy identifies that between 285 to 490 additional specialist educational placements will be required over the next five years, with 243 of these required for September 2023.

8. The Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Place Planning Strategy crucially considers both the supply of high-quality provision and support, and how to reduce the demand for more specialist provision in Nottinghamshire.

9. With an increased focus on locality working and local partnerships between County Council Special Educational Needs & Disabilities services and school leaders, it is expected that fewer children and young people will require specialist educational placements in the future in line with the Council's Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy approved in September 2020.

10. **Appendix 2** outlines the proposals to ensure that County Council is able to provide sufficient specialist educational placements over the next five years. The headline requirements identified in the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Place Planning Strategy are for:
 - an additional 285 - 490 places in specialist provision by September 2026, with at least 243 places required for September 2023
 - an additional special school for children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder / condition. The County Council's Policy Committee agreed in November 2019 to undertake a site search and feasibility study for a new Special School in the Hucknall / Ollerton areas. A preferred option site in Ollerton has been identified and feasibility work is continuing, looking at the site in detail particularly in the light of potential load bearing capacity and contamination issues of the ground. There are no obvious alternative sites in Council ownership in the search areas.
 - additional places to be focused on the Ashfield, Mansfield, and Gedling districts to meet these areas' current growth in demand
 - a range of provision with most of the additional placements being located either on existing mainstream school sites or new build schools (Specialist Satellite Centres), to allow opportunities for integration and access to the national curriculum. This is especially important for the cohort of children and young people with social, emotional, and mental health needs
 - the expansion of current Nottinghamshire Special School sites
 - adaptations to mainstream maintained and Academy schools to provide improved access for children and young people with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities.

11. In May 2021, the Department for Education announced the High Needs Provision Capital Allocations for 2021-2022 for local authorities. The allocation for Nottinghamshire is £5.316m.

Other Options Considered

12. The County Council has a statutory duty to provide an educational placement according to the type of provision (i.e. specialist or mainstream) named in a child's or young person's Education, Health & Care Plan.

Reasons for Recommendations

13. The Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Place Planning Strategy will ensure that the County Council is able to discharge its statutory duty in a timely and cost efficient way.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

15. The attached Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Place Planning Work Programme (**Appendix 2**) will require full costing. The delivery of the additional specialist educational placements, as outlined in the Strategy, will require funding from a range of sources including: future Department for Education capital allocations, S106 contributions from new housing developments, or the County Council's own capital programme. Currently there are no indications of the size or frequency of High Needs Provision Capital Allocations from the Department for Education beyond the amount for 2021-2022.
16. It should be noted that adding to the number of specialist educational placements funded by the High Needs Block will result in further pressure on this budget. However, without the additional placements in publicly funded educational settings the Local Authority will have to use higher cost independent placements, which in turn will create even more pressure on the High Needs Block.

Implications for Service Users

17. The Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Place Planning Strategy will enable children and young people to access specialist education placements required to meet their identified needs and to make a successful transition to adulthood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

- 1) recommends the proposed Nottinghamshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Place Planning Strategy for 2021-2026, attached as **Appendix 1**, to Policy Committee for approval
- 2) agrees to receive an annual update on progress with the implementation of the Strategy
- 3) agrees that the Chairman of the Committee writes to the Department of Education regarding the relatively low level of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities related funding for Nottinghamshire.

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 29/06/21)

18. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Children and Young People's Committee under its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 30/06/21)

19. The attached Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Place Planning Work Programme (**Appendix 2**) will require full costing and the funding identified to support it.
20. Currently there are no indications of the size or frequency of High Needs Provision Capital Allocations from the Department for Education beyond the amount for 2021-2022.
21. The High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant funds the revenue implications of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities specialist educational provision and the 2022-23 funding allocation is expected to be announced in the Summer. Despite increases in this funding in recent years the budget remains under pressure and this will need to be managed within the overall Dedicated Schools Grant in conjunction with the Early Years and Schools Forum.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Feasibility for a new Special School in Nottinghamshire – report to Policy Committee on 13th November 2019](#)

[Nottinghamshire SEND Policy 2020-2023](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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