

Meeting date: 26th September 2018
Report to: Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children,
Education and Skills
**Subject/report
title:** Draft Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) School Place
Commissioning Strategy
Report from: Director of Children's Services and Skills
**Report
author/lead
contact officer:** Ann Pearson



Wards affected:

All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

**Public/private
report:** Public

**Exempt by virtue
of paragraph:** N/A

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To update Cabinet Member on the provision of specialist school places across Solihull and present a draft school place commissioning strategy which considers a range of factors that are driving a need for change over the short to medium term.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 Approve consultation with schools, parent and all interested parties on the draft SEND School Places Commissioning Strategy for Solihull.

3. What is the issue?

3.1 This draft SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy seeks to set a baseline for specialist provision across Solihull and consider a range of factors that are driving a need for change over the short to medium term. The strategy provides information regarding the current and future SEND population in Solihull and draws conclusions regarding the potential need to make changes to specialist provision.

3.2 The aim of the strategy is to help the Council, schools, parents and the wider community understand the need for specialist provision planning and to establish future demand. It will provide a basis against which future specialist provision will be planned and set out a long term plan so that the cost of provision is in line with the

income received from the government in the form of the High Needs Block Dedicated Schools Grant.

- 3.3 At January 2018, Solihull maintained 1,444 statements and Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP). This represents an increase of 29 (2%) on January 2017 and an increase of over 200 since January 2016.
- 3.4 The data shows that between January 2016 and 2018 there has been a 21% drop in the number of pupils with statements and EHCPs being educated in mainstream schools and academies, with a corresponding increase in the number of pupils placed in specialist provision including independent special schools.
- 3.5 At January 2018, 40% of pupils with EHCPs were placed in maintained special schools and academies in Solihull, 124 pupils (8.5%) with a Statement/EHCP were placed outside of Solihull in the independent sector. Placements in the independent sector do cater for pupils with very complex needs however they are normally high cost and incur the cost of transporting the pupil outside of Solihull.
- 3.6 In advance of developing this school place commissioning strategy and in response to increasing pressures and costs in securing provision for children and young people with EHCPs, a complete review of data for SEND pupils has been undertaken. The output of this review has supported the development of a SEND forecasting model. The emerging model is based on historical data, from September 2013 to 2018 and uses a weighted average to project pupils numbers forward to January 2023. This data will be moderated against actual data year on year to consolidate and improve forecasting accuracy.
- 3.7 The future demographic forecasts show that between Jan 2018 and Jan 2023 the number of EHCPs for Solihull pupils are forecast to grow by 656. Post 16 and Further Education are showing the largest increase across all phases with a forecast growth of 494. The growth across all other phases is 162 EHCPs over the 5 year period.
- 3.8 Forecasts show that if current trends continue there will be a further 12% decrease in the number of pupils with EHCPs in mainstream school setting and a significant increase in demand for specialist provision, including independent provision.
- 3.9 The forecasting model also looks at the primary need of pupils. The data shows that the largest growth in demand will be in the area of Autism across all age phases. Growth is also forecast in Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) with a focus around secondary, post-16 and further education.
- 3.10 The forecast increase in numbers of Solihull pupils with an EHCP requiring special school or independent school places will incur significant additional cost to the High Needs Budget. This situation is unaffordable within existing and forecast levels of High Needs Grant.
- 3.11 A forecast overspend in the High Needs budget should not prevent the Council from investing in new provision or specialist places. For every child placed outside of the Solihull in independent provision, at least two pupils can be educated in provision in Solihull. Using a spend to save model, the Council must endeavour to fund the revenue required for the creation of new provision in Solihull, through the reduction of

placements outside of the Borough.

- 3.12 The Government has provided a grant to Council's to support the expansion of specialist provision. For Solihull this equates to £1m over a 3 year period (2018/19 to 2020/21) to support the creation and redesign of specialist provision in the Borough, in line with the identified priorities.
- 3.13 The draft Commissioning Strategy outlines the increases that have been made to places and provision. The data suggests six key priorities for future provision development:
- Establish a Special Free School with a focus around Autism.
 - Create Autism Enhanced provision in secondary schools across the Borough, (aim to open 2 by September 2019).
 - Consider the development of Post 16 Autism provision.
 - Create a south Solihull post 16 MLD provision in partnership with Solihull College.
 - Expand reception and KS1 places at Reynolds Cross and Merstone Schools.
 - Develop SEMH additionally resourced provision.
- 3.14 The strategy outlines a set of principles that should be at the core of the commissioning process when there is a need to create and expand specialist provision. The consultation process, if approved, will specifically seek views on these principles.
- 3.15 The creation of new specialist provision will need to be part of a wider programme of activity that looks to support and increase mainstream inclusion.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 The evaluation of options will be considered when determining how and where additional provision will be developed. The consultation process, which would be carried out during the Autumn Term, will seek to identify if the gaps in provision identified in the strategy match the views of parents and schools.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 If approved, the Strategy will be used to seek the views of all interested parties on the development of specialist provision across Solihull. The outcome of the consultation process will be used to update the commissioning strategy, which will be brought back to Cabinet Member for further consideration later this term.
- 5.2 Once approved, the strategy will be used as a basis for working with schools and providers to identify the most appropriate way to add places.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 Delivery of key themes in the Council Plan:

How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of the key themes in the Council Plan? *(select which themes apply and briefly state how the options / proposals in this report contribute to their delivery):*

- Improve Health and Wellbeing -
- Managed Growth -
- Build Stronger Communities -
- Deliver Value -

6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

6.2.1 If approved, a full consultation process will be carried out to identify the views of parents and carers on the development of specialist provision in Solihull. The outcome of this consultation process will be reported to Cabinet Member later this term.

6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.3.1 Consultation with all interested parties is proposed as part of this report.

6.3.2 No report has been considered by Scrutiny.

6.4 Financial implications:

6.4.1 There are no financial implications as a direct consequence of this report; however where additional specialist provision is required there will be capital and revenue implications. The DfE has allocated £1m to the Council to enable the creation or expansion of additional specialist places.

6.4.2 In order to fund additional provisions in Solihull, it will be necessary to prioritise developments that will replace out of borough places. This will require an explicit policy to amend existing placements from out of borough to new in borough provisions, where this is appropriate and in the best interest of the pupil.

6.5 Legal implications:

6.5.1 The Council has a legal duty to ensure there are sufficient school places to meet the needs of Solihull children.

6.6 Risk implications:

6.6.1 The key risk is that the additional specialist provision cannot be added in time to meet the growth in demand that is forecast. In addition there are risks such as the proposed costs of individual proposals exceeding the resources available.

6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:

6.7.1 None as a result of this report.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix A – Draft SEND School Place Commissioning Strategy

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 None