

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Children & Young People Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	12 January 2016	
TITLE:	SEND Funding and Pressures	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1 - Schools Forum Paper – SEN Need and Provision		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Council and schools face a range of funding and other pressures associated with the provision of support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) both due to demographic changes and national policy changes (SEND Reform).

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel notes the range of pressures and the work underway to address these.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 There are a combination of resource implications arising from the pressures described in this paper, though not arising directly from the recommendation above.
- 3.2 These include potential capital pressures, as well as revenue pressures both for consideration by Schools Forum for expenditure from the Direct Schools Grant, and for consideration within the Council's own budget setting process.

We await specific details of government New Burdens grant for future years in respect of the implications of SEND Reform.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The statutory framework is set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice and the Care Act 2014.

4.2 The range of services and support that schools are expected to fund and those which fall to Local Authorities and other bodies, is also statutorily prescribed.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 The Panel has been briefed on progress to date with implementation of the SEND Reforms and on the implications for children's services arising from the Care Act.

5.2 There are a range of capacity and funding pressures facing schools and local authorities which may result from a combination of demographic and social change (more disabled children with more complex needs surviving for longer; parental expectations for specialist provision) and policy change (SEND Reforms).

5.3 These pressures can be broadly broken down into 3 categories:-

- (1) Pressure on Special School places;
- (2) Pressure within mainstream schools and related services funded through the Direct Schools Grant;
- (3) Pressure within local authority funded services.

Special Schools

5.4 We have three Special Schools in Bath and North East Somerset. Both Fosse Way and Three Ways schools are graded Outstanding by Ofsted and are very popular. Both schools are full and unable to create additional capacity without capital investment and/or sites for expansion. Aspire Academy has not been inspected by Ofsted and specialises in provision for pupils with Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties (see separate paper on the Panel's agenda).

5.5 Officers are working with the two main Special Schools to consider options to create additional capacity locally and have been exploring alternative sites for expansion, alternative routes to secure capital funding, etc. This work is ongoing. Research has been commissioned to help analyse future need for places to inform any 'business case' for additional or expanded provision. This is referenced in Appendix 1.

5.6 The Mendip Special School, a new Free School sponsored by Fosse Way and ultimately to be based nearby in Somerset, should help to provide capacity for Somerset children who would otherwise have sought places at Fosse Way itself, thereby making some reduction in the local pressure on places.

Mainstream Schools

5.7 Individual mainstream schools supporting a greater than average number of pupils with SEND report that this can create both a capacity and financial pressure.

5.8 The work required in delivering the new, more personalised Education, Health and Care Plans also creates a pressure for key school staff involved in the assessment and reviewing processes.

5.9 The schools forum has been briefed on the pressures in the schools system (see Appendix 1) and will be considering proposals for additional investment during its January budget-setting meeting.

Local Authority Services

5.10 In addition to the demographic and other pressures referred to above, which also impact on Council services, the SEND Reforms have meant changes in practice and procedure (eg more person-centred face-to-face interaction), scope (eg eligibility expanded from 5-16 to be 0-25) and expectations (publication of local offer, raised expectations for parents).

5.11 The government has to some extent recognised the implications for local authorities through a specific one-off grant for SEND reform and through some 'new burdens' grant (only allocated on a one-year basis to date).

5.12 We have used these grants judiciously to support the project management, training and other one-off costs involved; and some increases in staffing and service capacity where needed.

5.13 The main reforms came into place in September 2014 and we knew from our planning work and the learning from 'pathfinder' authorities that we could expect some capacity pressures to arise as a result of:-

- a) Staff taking time to be trained and adapt to new working practices;
- b) Transitional work, as old 'statements' are converted to new 'Education Health and Care Plans'
- c) Underlying increase in workload due to the changes in practice, scope and expectations, outlined above.

5.14 The service has been able to use the grant funding to support the increased workload during the first year of the reforms and is now beginning to be able to clarify the underlying capacity pressures that have been created for us on an ongoing basis.

5.15 The specific key service pressures are as follows:-

- a) SEND practitioners/team – we increased the capacity of the team to work to the new processes and models of practice. The capacity created was at the lower end of the levels originally projected based on experience from pathfinder authorities and predicted workload. The capacity needs to be sustained at this level together with increased business support to the team to help to meet statutory timescales and improve efficiency.
- b) Preparing for Adulthood Co-ordinator – a joint funded post with Adult Care.
- c) Advocacy Service – additional capacity created through a commissioned service for young people as required under the reforms.
- d) SEND Partnership Service – additional workload/capacity required for what was previously the Parent Partnership Service, supporting parents of children with SEND.

- e) Educational Psychology – a 48% increase in assessments has been mitigated as far as possible by restricting the service provided to statutory work only, but still requires additional capacity to meet statutory timescales.
- f) Home to School Transport – the increased complexity described above as well as numbers of children requiring Special School placements that are only available further from home is creating a substantial pressure on transport budgets. A Strategic Transport Review will explore ways to mitigate such pressures in the medium to long term, in addition to the work mentioned above to tackle local special school capacity.

5.16 More specific analysis of the pressures together with announcements on the national grant available will inform final budget proposals that will be considered by the council through the Strategic Review and budget setting process.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 The pressures described above cannot be ignored or avoided. A range of work is in hand to explore ways to mitigate and address the pressures through all of the relevant channels.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None applicable.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Special Schools, mainstream schools (through Schools Forum), Cabinet member and relevant officers have been consulted in drawing together the information in this paper.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	<i>Related papers on the agenda for this Committee today</i>
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