

Children and Families Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 23rd November,
2023

at 5.30 pm

PLEASE NOTE TIME OF MEETING

Conference Room 3 - Civic Centre

This meeting is open to the public

Members

Councillor T Bunday (Chair)

Councillor Barnes-Andrews (Vice-Chair)

Councillor J Baillie

Councillor Chapman

Councillor Lambert

Councillor Mrs Mintoff

Councillor Webb

Otieno

Rob Sanders

Catherine Hobbs

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND PRESENTATIONS

9 **SEND AND HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT** (Pages 1 - 20)

Report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel consider the appended information on SEND pressures, the SEND Capital Programme and home to school transport and the approaches proposed to address the identified challenges.

Wednesday, 15 November 2023

Service Director, Legal & Governance



SEND Strategy and HTST Service

Tammy Marks and Pete Boustred

Session Overview:

- Special School Expansion and Relocation

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SEND Support in Mainstream Schools

- Home to School Travel Review

Special School Reconfiguration

SEND EXPANSION STRATEGY



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Purpose of issue: Preliminary
 Client: Southampton City Council
 Project: SEND Expansion Strategy
 Location: Southampton City
 Drawing name: Diagram Showing SEND Expansion Strategy
 Scale @ A3: NTS

Drawn: CW
 Checked: -
 Project no.: 22-1256
 Date: 25.01.2023
 Role: Architects, Property
 Drawing number: 22-1256-SCC-00-XX-SK-A-0205
 Revision: A By: CW Checked: - Date: 27/01/23

Special School Reconfiguration

- Taking final proposals for £40M investment to February Cabinet
- Extra 150 Secondary Complex Needs cases by September 2026
- Extra 26 SEMH Primary School places for September 2026

Units/Satellites/Resource Provisions

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- Redbridge girls SEMH – growing but owing to physical restraints and type of need, increases need to be delicately managed
- Mason Moor SEN Unit for Autism and Complex Needs

Need more Units/Resource Provisions...

Current Situation in Mainstream :

- Increasing complexity of need related to behaviour that challenges
- Recruitment and financial challenges
- Inconsistency in support for SEND
- Numbers of EHCPs increasing - above national and statistical neighbours - need to ascertain if our EHCA assessments have a lower threshold
- Numbers requiring SEND support relatively static
- Autism and SEMH identified by schools and families as consistent themes

Peter Grey's Work

Mainstream funding task and finish group – Exploring the implementation of a system of funding that is devolved to and managed by school clusters.

Aim is to support earlier intervention, increase school to school support and challenge and ownership of High Needs Block.

Anticipate that over time this will lead to reduction in EHCP's, giving more flexibility to school's in the delivery of provision and freeing up capacity in services to support with most complex cases.

Aspiring for September 2024 implementation.

All Head Teachers event being planned for New Year

Delivering Better Value:

SEMH - Appointment of additional outreach support for SEMH/Challenging behaviour – referral route will be via PHIG.

Autism in schools – please prioritise this. Unique offer for all schools to have access to this specialist input. Those who aren't in this years cohort need to join next years.

SEND Audit Manager – Daniel starting in January. Will revisit co-produced audit tool. Looking for a couple of volunteer schools for Daniel to support completion of. Training will then be delivered to all school. Schools targeted for additional support via Schools Monitoring Group and requests from schools.

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Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance – [Southampton Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance](#)

Appointment to joint funded Sensory OT position – Focus will be training and guidance to schools and workshops for parents.

Outreach review – task and finish group from Jan 2024 (like Portsmouth's triage approach)

Review of AP – Meetings with Heads Jan 2024

Home to School Travel Service

Overview of the Service

- SCC's statutory responsibilities - travel assistance for eligible children under the Education Acts 1996 and 2011, and the Equality Act 2010.
- Travel options currently used include: Taxis and minibuses (including solo vehicles), Personal Travel Budgets (PTB), Independent Travel Training and Scholar bus passes.
- Currently managed within the Transport & Planning Division under the Directorate for Place:
 - Budget responsibility for transport delivery officers.
 - Line management of the 150+ Passenger Assistants.
 - Assesses mainstream and exceptional circumstances applications.
 - Responsibility for service delivery: taxis / minibuses / bus passes / personal travel budgets / travel training.
- Directorate for Wellbeing (Children and Learning):
 - Owns and sets the Council's HTST policy & Assigns schools for children with an EHCP and agrees SEN eligibility and solo travel.
 - Budget responsibility for the transport provision (including Escorts (passenger assistants)).
- Review undertaken by Edge - Completed end May 2023
 - Recommended efficiencies, savings and cost reduction / avoidance.
 - To achieve a 'fit for purpose' operation that future proofs the service to cope with growing demand whilst maintaining service quality and cost control.

Recap on Service Issues

- The HTST Service faced near service failure in 2022/23 for the arrangements for the new academic year as a result of a combination of factors:
 - **Operational Pressures – including under-resourced team:**
 - No. of children has more than doubled over last 6-7 years but the FTE has remained static.
 - Arrangements not in place on time and perceived poor communications from service and to parents.
 - **Pressures in the contracted marketplace:**
 - Transport operators unable to fulfil some contracts and shortfall in supply of minibuses.
 - Increasingly challenging and changing pupil transport requirements.
 - Increased transport operator costs and requirement for Escorts.
 - **Rising no. of children requiring school travel:**
 - 713 pupils transported in 2016-17 (627 SEND) – risen to ~1,400 in 2022-23 (c. 1,150 SEND) (96% increase).
 - Proportion of pupils with an EHCP receiving transport high (43% compared with a benchmark average of ~35%).
 - Predicated growth of SEND children (key cost driver) of 10% per annum to c. 1,788 by 2029.
 - **Rising service costs – higher than average costs:**
 - Ave. cost per child - £8,420 - Cost per pupil is highest of the non-capital cities of sample benchmarked against (range: £3,217-£8,420).
 - Service costs are escalating as the number of children increases.
 - Key component of costs is the provision of SEND transport (taxis and minibuses, including solo vehicles).
 - Increases in SEND demand will continue to create a cost pressure each year on year.
- **Budget impact:**
 - Budget for 2022/23 set at £4.4M (despite 2021/22 outturn of £5.9M).
 - Additional overspend in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22 outturn was ~£2.6M.

Service Operational Update: Service Demand

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No. of	July 2022	July 2023	October 2023
Children Entitled to School Travel (TOTAL)	1,370	1,576	1,665
Children on Transport Routes (Taxi/Minibus)	820	934	932
Daily door to Door Taxi/Minibus Routes (Children per route)	330 (4.15)	317 (4.97)	303 (5.49)
Personal Travel Budgets	93	90	93
Bus Passes	438	532	594
Children Independently Travel Trained	0 (full academic year)	7 (full academic year)	4 (academic year to date)

Finance – Agreed Baseline: Sept 2023

- Finance data for 2023/24 forecast outturn reporting agreed in baseline report.
- The updated forecast outturn as at end September 2023 is:

May MTFS forecast outturn: £10.02M

September forecast outturn: £09.75M

Reduction in forecast outturn: £00.27M

- Includes:
 - **Finance data for all spend to end of July 2023.**
 - **TO contracts in place from September and contract prices.**
 - **PTB data.**
 - **Bus pass data.**
- The reduction in the forecast outturn in the Benefits Profile for 2023/23 is £48,700.
- There are assumptions included about the growth in applications and eligible children between now and end of October 2023.
- The gross forecast saving on school travel delivery is £411k (not accounting for the Edge Phase 1 commission and the overpayment loss allowed for).
- Successful delivery of the transformation programme forecast to achieve ongoing net annual transport revenue costs of ~£1.54M.

Transformation Programme Update

- **Phase 1 of transformation Programme completed end October 2023.**
- **Phase 2 of transformation programme resource approved – programme plan being drafted.**
- **Service Restructure:**
 - JDPS and JEQs produced and JE Panel: 15th November 2023.
 - Staff and union consultation proposed to commence 1st December 2023.
 - New structure to be in place by 1st April 2024.

PTB process under review and to be updated.

- **Innovative sustainable travel solutions feasibility, e.g., multi pick-up locations:**
 - Feasibility to be completed and proposal drafted, including pilot.
- **Post-16 transport contribution:**
 - Proposal being drafted that considers potential income v cost to administer for future policy update.
- **Process and procedures:**
 - Scoping 'As-is' and 'To-be'.
 - Review of CLA school travel process underway.

Transformation Programme Update: Policy

- **Consultation on update policy underway:**

- Parent Carer Forums for Consultation – 5th and 11th October 2023 and 20th Nov 2023.
- Young persons' questionnaire produced and issued to schools and parent carers:
- Email to all schools' Headteachers, City News, YourCityYourSay, Social Media Channels etc.
- 147 responses to w/e 10/11/2023 (would expect 110+). Consultation closes: 27/11/2023.

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- **Appeals Policy:**

- Appendix to main policy to be drafted (as response to draft Policy consultation feedback) and appended to the policy once the consultation feedback has been analysed – to be agreed by 11/12/2023.
- **Cabinet: 05/02/2024.**
- **Scrutiny period following Cabinet on w/c 06/02/24.**
- **New policy adoption: 14/02/2024.**

Engagement and Communications

Engagement (Transport Operators, Schools and PCF):

- Transport Operator Forums held June 2023:
 - Approx. 30 new suppliers joined (originally 20 suppliers on the DPS).
- Transport Operator Forums: December 2023 and January 2024:
 - Lessons Learned from Summer 2023.
 - TO and driver expectations / behaviours.
 - New DPS.

Communications:

- Parent Carer webpage with live updates implemented.
- School Travel Service web pages – pages reviewed and being updated by Comms Team.
- Parent Carer guidance booklet – reviewed and being updated to final draft.
- Suppliers' webpage – produced by Comms Team and ready for review.
- Driver and Escort summary expectations drafted and ready for issue.

Transformation Summary Update: Route Optimisation

- Assist the School Travel Team in the planning of the most efficient routes and transport provision for the 1000+ children.
- External system demos taken place and review of internal systems completed.
- Business Case being drafted for agreement by the School Travel Transformation Board 13th Dec 2023.
- Three schools selected to test concept: Vermont, Cedar, Bitterne (ARB and Main).
- Approach:
 1. Review the individual children who have been identified as entitled with the SEND team (hierarchical travel needs, and eligibility).
 2. Establish the travel service requirements for the school.
 3. Consider the implications of optimising routes.
 4. Engage with stakeholders to advise them of changes to enlist their support.
 5. Complete tendering if required and mobilisation activity.
 6. Put implementation support in place to help the smooth transition to the new travel arrangements.

Transformation Summary Update: DPS

- The Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) is used as a 'vehicle' for the procurement of taxis and minibuses for school travel and the current DPS has now exceeded the published contract value £25M threshold.
- On 10/10/23, the EMB agreed in principle that the Council should commission a new DPS.
- Scoping underway and includes options for the DPS to be used for travel procurement across the Council, e.g., children looked after and adult services, and one that offers improvements to the existing DPS, such as more robust terms and conditions for quality assurance monitoring and reverse auctioning.
- Projected spend for a DPS over the next ten years will be up to ~£200M. Full Council Decision required Feb 2024.
- DPS will need to be in place by the Spring 2024 for the route tendering for School Travel Summer 2024.

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