



Agenda

To all Members of the

CABINET

Notice is given that a Meeting of the Cabinet is to be held as follows:

Venue: Council Chamber, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster DN1 3BU

Date: Wednesday, 8th November, 2023

Time: 10.00 am

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**Damian Allen
Chief Executive**

Issued on: Tuesday, 31 October 2023

Governance Services Officer for this meeting:

Sarah Maxfield
01302 736723

City of Doncaster Council

www.doncaster.gov.uk

Item

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To consider the extent, if any, to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.
3. Public Questions and Statements.

(A period not exceeding 20 minutes for questions and statements from members of the public and Elected Members to the Mayor of Doncaster, Ros Jones. Questions/Statements should relate specifically to an item of business on the agenda and be limited to a maximum of 100 words. As stated within Executive Procedure Rule 3.3 each person will be allowed to submit one question/statement per meeting. A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by e-mail to the Governance Team no later than 5.00 p.m. on Friday, 3rd November 2023. Each question or statement must give the name and address of the person submitting it. Questions/Statements should be sent to the Governance Team, Floor 2, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster, DN1 3BU, or by email to Democratic.Services@doncaster.gov.uk).

4. Declarations of Interest, if any.
 5. Decision Record Forms from the meeting held on 11 October 2023 for noting (previously circulated).
- A. Reports where the public and press may not be excluded**

Key Decisions

6. Equitable and Inclusive Access to Education for All.

Cabinet Members

Cabinet Responsibility For:

**Chair – Ros Jones, Mayor of
Doncaster**

Budget and Policy Framework

**Vice-Chair – Deputy Mayor
Councillor Glyn Jones**

Housing and Business

Councillor Lani-Mae Ball

Portfolio Holder for Early Help, Education, Skills
and Young People

Councillor Nigel Ball

Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Communities,
Leisure and Culture

Councillor Joe Blackham

Portfolio Holder for Highways, Infrastructure and
Enforcement

Councillor Rachael Blake

Portfolio Holder for Children's Social Care and
Equalities

Councillor Phil Cole

Portfolio Holder for Finance, Traded Services and
Planning

Councillor Mark Houlbrook

Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Waste

Councillor Jane Nightingale

Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources

Councillor Sarah Smith

Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care

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**City of
Doncaster
Council**

Equitable and Inclusive Access to Education for All

**Date: 8th
November 2023**

To the Chair and Members of Cabinet

Report Title: Equitable and Inclusive Access to Education for All

| Relevant Cabinet Member(s) | Wards Affected | Key Decision |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Councillor Lani-Mae Ball | All | Yes |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to set out an update on the approach, and model that has been developed to support our overall vision for equitable and inclusive education in Doncaster. The approach and proposals identified builds on the work already underway through the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (see hyperlink below) to support children and young people to thrive, wherever their starting point.
2. Since the start of the pandemic Doncaster has seen a significant rise in the overall number of young people identified as having special educational needs or disabilities. This increase includes the number of young people with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) and those with SEND support needs. The rise in demand, alongside increasing financial pressures, has also placed challenges on the wider workforce connected to those with special educational needs including those in the health, care, and school sectors.
3. Our analysis of the Doncaster system through the 'Delivering Better Value' in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) programme has sharpened our understanding of our next steps, supporting the need for a more clearly aligned future model of support and provision.
4. Since November 2022, much has changed in the local landscape as we have shaped our approach and began to deliver changes. Significant partnership engagement has led to the development of collaborative approach to the delivery of the implementation plan.
5. We have already acted on our intent to bring about a more cohesive local system, founded on the principles of equity and fairness. We have strengthened decision making processes through enhanced quality assurance, supported mainstream schools to do more to maintain local school places for those with higher levels of need, without the need for an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) and have, where appropriate for the young person, brought some back from out of area placements to be educated in their locality community.

6. We have set out a new approach to improving equitable and inclusive education in Doncaster. The key components are
 - Developing a place based local Inclusion Charter.
 - Locality planning, delivery and building relational practice.
 - Delivering capability within the system.
 - Effective transition and assessment at each phase.
7. The delivery of a seamless pathway for assessment within localities is a joint commissioning priority for the partnership. The proposals in this report identify some changes to the Doncaster education landscape to support the delivery of this new way of working, ultimately enabling children to access placements closer to home, retaining a local community connection.

EXEMPT REPORT

8. There is no exempt information detailed within this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. To note and comment on the changes implemented to date and the impact.
10. Approve the future overall approach detailed in the report, including both the strategic intent and new provision extension identified in para 22 and financial implications, including the impact on future savings and cost avoidance.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

11. The proposals in this report brings cohesion and additional support to the education system to better meet the needs of children and young people locally.

BACKGROUND

National context:

12. There is significant concern regarding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and inclusion provision nationally. The Government Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review, which was launched in 2019, concluded in March 2022, with the publication of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 'Green Paper'. This paper acknowledged the current pressures around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) nationally. The paper concluded that:
 - Outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or in alternative provision are poor.
 - Navigating the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for children, young people, and their families
 - The system is not delivering value for money for children, young people, and families.

Local drivers for change:

13. Children, young people, and family voice, self-evaluation and 'Delivering Better Value' project findings have all helped to shape the underlying drivers for change which include:
 - Rates of identification for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support (12.80%) now being in line with national (12.60%) and regional averages (12.90%) after being much lower than both in 2017-2018 (by 2.5%)
 - Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) has increased from 1898 in 2019 to 2489 currently, a 31% increase.

- There has been an increase in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) overall and in more complex needs since 2019. This has led to an increase in the number of young people educated outside of the borough from 70 in 2019 to 161 in 2023.
- Timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) has been impacted, dropping in 2022, now improving quickly (49% in Quarter 2 2023, against national of 51%).
- The High Needs Block funding in Doncaster is predicted to overspend by £5,800,000 during 2023-24, an overall overspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant of £25,800,000 by the 31st of March 2024.
- Academic outcomes are variable for those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those with send support needs and whilst Attainment 8 has improved in recent years, outcomes remain inconsistent.
- The overall number of children not in full time provision, which increased through the pandemic, following a targeted approach has dropped by 53% since March 2022. (245 in March 22 to 115 Feb 23).
- Overall absence has increased and is just above National Averages (by 1%) and, for Persistent Absence is 3% higher at primary and 5% higher for secondary.
- Absence at special schools has improved and is now better than the national average and permanent exclusions continue to decline from 110 to 47 in 2021-2022.
- Suspensions remain an area of significant challenge. Suspension rates at secondary have reduced significantly overall from 46.3 per 100 pupils in 2019 to 29.8 in 2022, and for primary from 3.0 to 1.1 and are now in line with national.

Proposed Pathway Changes

14. This pathway will differ from the current model by supporting earlier, with more accurate identification, assessment, and provision to support needs. The broad differences are shown below:

| Current model | Future model |
|--|---|
| When a child moves into mainstream school, from early years provision, the funding stops. An Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) may be necessary. | The funding pathway continues. Any change in need is assessed so more funding is allocated. Settings and schools work together on planning to meet need. The Local Authority oversees this and monitor's transition. |
| If a child's needs increase, the school will look to put an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) in place to meet need. | Any change in need is assessed so more funding is allocated. The school is supported to improve its provision so that the child makes increased progress. If alternative provision will support re-integration or access to therapeutic support, this is put in place via the new Element 3 mainstream 'top up' funding to schools process. |
| Where an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) is in place, but the school is still struggling to meet need, a specialist placement is sought. | An increased funding request can allow schools and settings to access 'specialist' levels of funding but can be delivered, with support, within the mainstream school. If a child or young person is still at risk of a specialist placement, they attend a multi-agency assessment hub in order to determine an effective plan and cross- |

| | |
|---|---|
| | agency professional advice. This may lead to a continued mainstream placement with multi-disciplinary support or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and a specialist placement, depending on need. |
| If there are no available specialist places, the child or young person may be placed at a school outside Doncaster. | The child or young person may attend a local specialist placement part-time or for a limited period, which is funded through commissioned local specialist school places. They may also access a local hub for support with social, emotional or speech and communication needs. An Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) may be appropriate at this stage. |

Progress to Date

15. Over the last year, the council has worked with all stakeholders and multi-agency partners, including children, young people, parents and schools to develop our local strategy and implementation plan. Since the approval of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy by Cabinet in November 2022, there has been much progress in the delivery of this work. In summary:

- A number of stakeholder groups have been set up to deliver the strategy, including groups of parents and carers, children and young people, school professionals and leaders and across wider services. These have all reported into the local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) board. The iteration of priorities and objectives in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy implementation plan has been done in partnership with these local interests and also in dialogue with the Department for Education (DfE).
- Partners have developed a local appraisal of services within Doncaster, through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 0-25, which has informed the development of priorities for the Doncaster Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) joint commissioning strategy. A wider evaluation has been developed through a partnership Self Evaluation document.
- Partners have developed a local handbook and toolkit for practitioners, aimed at ensuring a more consistent approach to identification, assessment, and intervention. This includes a new description of what should be ordinarily available in schools and the design of a new funding model which will allow a consistency of resourcing against specific levels of need within schools.
- 40 new specialist placements for children and young people with social, emotional and Mental Health needs have been developed within the borough, which will be delivered by January 2024. A broader study of local sufficiency has taken place, much of which is described below.
- A Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) employability plan has been developed which has seen the emergence of the new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Employers forum and the creation of dedicated posts within the council aimed at increasing the number of employment opportunities for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- A new General Development Pathway has supported earlier intervention for children and young people who have the potential for diagnosis of autism or Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which has supported practitioners to develop stronger initial responses to need.

- We have strengthened quality assurance of all high needs spending to ensure that all decisions are scrutinised and tested so that wherever possible young people can be supported within appropriate provisions without escalation to more expensive provision, and without the need for an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP), where appropriate. Wherever possible the panel will seek to find a mainstream funding solution, providing a package of support to a mainstream school provided that this is consistent with needs and aspirations. We expect to achieve a 20% reduction on out of area placement spending through the actions we are taking by 2026-27. We are targeting transitions in order to ensure that children have the required support to be successful at the next stage.
- We have created several school specific preventative projects, where high levels of need are likely to create pressure on the high needs block. These have been developed in a range of localities in order to offer children support at an early point, before needs escalate. For example, we have created a project at a primary school in the East, which has high mobility, deprivation, social care involvement and high Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support numbers. We have created a specialist class within this setting, made up of children that may have become out of area placements. This is projected to cost £386,002 for 3 years but also mitigate further higher costs placements being made, whilst also keeping children within their community.
- We have already widened the specialist offer within Doncaster. A new Post 16 provision at Stonehill School will grow to 36 places within three years. This provision will prevent escalating costs within the private post 16 sector, saving a likely £30,000 per place, building to £1,000,898 per year by year 3.
- The provision of a new class at Coppice School will support a further 24 places for children with more complex needs, including a small number who are returning from out of city placements. This is likely to bring about cost prevention of £1,800,000 per year.
- Wherever possible we are aiming for children and young people to be placed closer to home, where appropriate and when it is right for them. So far, we have supported the return of 10 young people back into Doncaster schools in order to improve outcomes, which has yielded a saving of at least £250,000.
- Our new Social, Emotional and Mental Health units, located within Doncaster schools will ensure provision that would have previously only been available out of the city. All 40 Social Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) hub places will be filled by January 2024. These places average £17,500 per year as opposed to a conservative average of £75,000 per year for out of area places. This will create a cost avoidance of £2,300,000 per year totaling £6,900,000 over 3 years. All four provisions have been commissioned on the basis that children and young people will be able to access mainstream provisions at the next key stage This will enable significant further savings, reducing the number of young people who are placed at the biggest high needs growth points (Years 7 and 12).

Proposals for Alternative Provision

The proposals below have been identified to extend existing provision to enable:

- Support employability options pre-16 and increase access to employment and training at Post 16 by commissioning increased employability provision for 14–16-year-olds.
- Extending the number of children and young people with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs who are supported into mainstream placements, and also extending the reach to support primary and secondary transitions through alternative provision.

16. Existing support is currently delivered through the Big Picture Invest contract (Big Picture Doncaster and Vega College). This contract will expire in August 2024, and the services will then be commissioned in a different way through the Doncaster Specialist Education framework, enabling a sustained offer going forward, commissioned directly for and by the Council.
17. As part of the Doncaster Growing Together Strategy 2017, an application was submitted to the Life Chances Fund for a Social Impact Bond to introduce Big Picture Learning to Doncaster. Big Picture Learning had the potential to offer a transformational new model of alternative provision into the education system in Doncaster. It is a model of learning that focuses on one student at a time, with small class sizes and a curriculum taught in a way that is centred on the passions and interests of children and young people.
18. Learning from the first year led to a revised delivery model and a series of significant changes agreed through the Social Impact Bond Contract which gave freedom to:
 - Engage a range of delivery partners to further a new model of KS4 provision.
 - Develop a blended offer of delivery, with some learning taking place online.
 - Increase the range and scope of the cohort in order to support those who are out of education or require support at key transition phases.
 - Agree a new financial model to reflect the changes to the delivery model and cohort volumes, ultimately producing a higher quality delivery at a lower cost than previously planned.
19. To date, over 400 children and young people have accessed provision through the Big Picture Invest contract with all achieving at least one of the Payment by Result outcomes. An independent external evaluation will soon commence which will report on the successes of the Social Impact Bond contract, including impact on improved outcomes, overall levels of social mobility within the Borough and contribution to value for money savings or cost avoidance.
20. During the remainder of the Big Picture Invest contract, we will maximise all available opportunities across both provisions, with the addition of a further 10 places for KS4 in Vega College, taking the total to 35. We are further aiming to increase the numbers of young people across Key Stages 2 and 3 over the next 8 months to reach a potential of 100 places by September 2024 within the Big Picture Learning provision. This will include outreach transition support within Doncaster primary schools.
21. Funding from a Life Chances Fund (LCF) Transition Grant will enable us to design and complete a scoping project ensure current delivery partners are able to transition seamlessly out of the existing contractual arrangements. This extended project and learning from current arrangements will enable the Council to better shape and define future need across primary and secondary phases, identifying demand and establishing a sustainable Alternative Provision (AP) model thus avoiding escalating costs and ensuring that children and young people are placed in provision that better meets their needs. The aim is to ensure sustainability and continued effectiveness, embedding Big Picture and Vega College within the Doncaster education system and identify further opportunities for added value and improved outcomes for children and young people.

22. Capital Investment

- Approval has already been approved for delegated decision from the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Capital Grant. The investment to support the above changes include:

- Alternative Provision £507, 212 to refurbish Hillside Academy site to support increased volume of places within the Alternative Provision sector and re-integration and engagement.
- Specialist Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Capital: £1,129,741 to develop Post 16 provision and £390,000 to build extra capacity within local specialist provision for those with complex need.
- Development of increased enhanced resource provision, based upon our analysis of emerging need, which is likely to be for Autistic spectrum disorder and Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs. £1,200,000 of capital spend is earmarked for this purpose.
- Mainstream school Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Capital: £1,200,000 to support increased Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) capacity at mainstream sites, wherever possible linked to the development of innovative projects aimed to strengthen children's ability to sustain mainstream placements.

23. Impact

- We believe that the actions already introduced will enable the council to reduce placement costs by around 20% by 2026-27, thereby creating smaller in year variances over the course of the next 4 years, which will, in turn constrain high needs growth despite growing demand. We are conscious that wider system reform and shared accountability are key to further cost prevention. Our plan for this has been developed with key partners such as schools and the Department for Education and is set out within our vision and approach below. The Department holds us to account for delivery of this work through quarterly reporting and conversations with our regional Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) leads.
- We have worked with partners in schools in order to develop a set of needs indicators which will be the foundation for a fairer system, whereby there is a consistent standard of identification and assessment in all schools. This will, in turn, support the delivery of a transparent system which will make visible the level of need in each setting.
- It is expected that the proposals identified in the SEND Strategy and outlined in the analysis from the Delivering Better Value fund and action plan will stabilise high needs funding projections.
- We have estimated the savings created from the revised model of provision as approach as set out in the report is shown below:

| <i>High Needs Block Funding</i> | <i>2023/24</i> | <i>2024/25</i> | <i>2025/26</i> | <i>2026/27</i> |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Key Stage 3 Early Intervention placements | 606,004 | 1,463,345 | 1,489,504 | 1,534,189 |
| Key Stage 3 and 4 Alternative Provision | 1,709,683 | 1,804,865 | 1,879,826 | 2,226,452 |
| Key Stage 2 Re-engagement and preventative and early intervention places | 1,893,035 | 802,539 | 826,615 | 851,414 |
| Specialist autism and hospital education | 1,368,965 | 1,617,682 | 1,666,213 | 1,716,199 |

| | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Additional Post 16 placements | 245,667 | 464,040 | 813,960 | 871,604 |
| Additional specialist placements for complex needs | 120,040 | 482,987 | 497,477 | 512,401 |
| Out of Area savings from Alternative Provision | 0 | -350,000 | -950,000 | -1,550,000 |
| Out of area savings Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) provision | 0 | -600,000 | -600,000 | -600,000 |
| Out of Area Complex specialist provision | -69,112 | -250,868 | -250,868 | -250,868 |
| Post 16 savings | 0 | -712,215 | -1,068,322 | -1,240,632 |
| TOTAL | 5,874,282 | 4,722,374 | 4,304,404 | 4,070,757 |
| Previous total costs (at quarter 1) | 5,609,963 | 4,741,789 | 5,803,182 | 6,201,296 |
| Savings per year from changes | 264,320 | -19,415 | -1,498,777 | -2,130,539 |

24. A further £2,000,000 of savings has been estimated from September 2025, as the impact of the 'Delivering Better Value' programme is realised reducing demand due to more effective universal services. The overall impacts of this work is modelled in the financial implications below.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED







25. To approve the new approach and model - recommended option.
26. To continue with existing landscape of provision, which is not financially sustainable and does not currently meet the range of needs in Doncaster.



REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

27. The activity described within this report will allow children and young people's needs to be understood and met earlier, thereby minimising frustration for families and schools. It will also deliver greater join up between services. The overall impact of this work will be to ensure greater consistency at the earlier stages of intervention, reducing the need to make more expensive provision at a later point.

28. IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| Great 8 Priority | Positive Overall | Mix of Positive & Negative | Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall | Neutral or No implications |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
|  Tackling Climate Change | ✓ | | | |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>Improving the range of local provision will ensure that less young people will have to travel out of borough for school. This will, in turn, limit the amount of transport that is provided by the council, thereby limiting ecological impacts.</p> | | | | |
|  Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work | ✓ | | | |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>This work will ensure that educational provision is more effective in developing the skills of our children and young people. It will also create a new landscape of employment and training opportunities for young people when they leave school.</p> | | | | |
|  Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs | ✓ | | | |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>As part of this strategy, we will work with training providers and employers to ensure that young people with special needs or disabilities are able to access meaningful and successful employment in later life.</p> | | | | |
|  Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all | ✓ | | | |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>The partnership will improve joint planning and commissioning arrangements in order to ensure that health provision is timely and appropriate for children and young people.</p> | | | | |
|  Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs | | | | ✓ |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>Ensuring a stronger system of local provision will limit transport to out of city settings.</p> | | | | |
|  Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough | ✓ | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>This principle is key to our work in supporting schools to deliver improved practices to work with families to meet the needs of young people at an earlier point. This strategy will build relational practice across the borough.</p> | | | | |
|  <p>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</p> | | | | ✓ |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>Not directly relevant</p> | | | | |
|  <p>Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</p> | | | | ✓ |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>Not directly relevant</p> | | | | |
| Fair & Inclusive | ✓ | | | |
| <p>Comments:</p> <p>Fairness and inclusivity underpin the core principles of this strategy. Young people have a right to a high-quality education and to employment, regardless of their needs. This strategy aims to build the skills and awareness across Doncaster that will deliver enhanced inclusion so that young people with special needs or disabilities can access education, close to home, with their peers.</p> | | | | |

29. Legal Implications [Officer Initials: HP | Date: 11/10/2023]

30. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to do anything that individuals may generally do. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council the power to purchase goods and services. The Council must comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 when implementing the amendments to the contractual arrangements set out at paragraph 20.
31. A local authority has a number of specific statutory duties to children and young people. S17 of the Children Act 1989 provides that it shall be the general duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far, as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families, by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs. Under the Education Act 1996 the Council as an education authority has a duty to promote high standards of education and fair access to education. It also has a general duty to secure sufficient school in their area, and to consider the need to secure provision for children with special educational needs. The Authority has a number of legal duties regarding children with special educational needs. It has a duty to identify and assess the special educational needs of children and young people for whom they are responsible. Under the Children and Families Act 2014, the Authority must consider how the child or young person can be supported to facilitate their development and to help them achieve their educational and other outcomes. The statutory guidance 'SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years' provides further details on the duties. There is also specific statutory guidance on Alternative Provision that should be followed.
32. The decision maker must also be aware of the Council's obligations under the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It requires public authorities when exercising their functions to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not. The relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This has particular relevance to children and young people who have a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

33. Financial Implications [Officer Initials: SB | Date: 09/10/2023]

Revenue Implications

Changes resulting from details identified in this cabinet report are projected to cost £0.26m in 23/24 and then save -£0.02m in 24/25, -£1.50m in 25/26 & -£2.13m in 26/27. This amounts to a total reduction in the current projected high needs block Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) overall deficit by the end of 26/27 of -£3.38m. This is set out in the table shown within paragraph 23 above. Table A below shows the associated expected impact on place numbers.

Table A – gross changes to place numbers in settings expected to arise from recommendations of cabinet report:

| <u>High Needs Block Funding</u> | 2023/24 April 23 | 2023/24 Sept 23 | 2024/25 April 24 | 2024/25 Sept 24 | 2025/26 April 25 | 2025/26 Sept 25 | 2026/27 April 26 | 2026/27 - Sept 26 |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Key Stage 3 Early Intervention placements | 25 | 25 | 100 (maximum from Jan 24) | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Key Stage 3 and 4 Alternative Provision | 73 | 73 | 83 | 86 | 86 | 99 | 99 | 124 |
| Key Stage 2 Preventative Places | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| Specialist autism and Hospital Education | 57 | 57 | 67 | 67 | 67 | 67 | 67 | 67 |
| Additional Post 16 placements | 0 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 27 | 54 | 54 | 66 |
| Additional specialist placements for complex needs | 0 | 0 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 24 |
| Out Of Area Savings from Alternative Provision | 0 | 0 | 0 | -10 | -10 | -20 | -20 | -30 |
| Out Of Area Savings Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Provision | 0 | 0 | -10 | -10 | -10 | -10 | -10 | -10 |
| Out Oof Area Complex specialist provision | 0 | 0 | 0 | -3 | -3 | -3 | -3 | -3 |
| Post 16 savings | 0 | 0 | 0 | -12 | -12 | -24 | -24 | -24 |
| TOTAL | 187 | 187 | 296 | 301 | 301 | 319 | 319 | 346 |
| Longer Term placements excluding Key Stage 3 Early Intervention placements | 162 | 162 | 196 | 225 | 201 | 243 | 243 | 270 |

As part of the review of the High needs block Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) the assumption regarding savings as a result of the 'Delivering Better Value' work, with indicative savings of c.£2m identified by Newtons/CIPFA, has been amended to start from Sept 2025 (with the impact of the work with schools to embed into practice and reduce costs, generally around high cost out of authority placements expected to be felt from that point). This offsets the above savings of -£3.38m by £2.83m, when compared to the quarter 1 of 23/24 position.

The revised overall High Needs Block dedicated schools grant, in year and cumulative balances, are shown in the summary Table B below, with an overall change to the cumulative deficit by March 2027 of -£0.72m.

The impact of the changes from this report are greatest by 26/27 at which point the in-year deficit is projected to have reduced to £2.8m, from the previously reported position at quarter 1 of £5.1m.

Whilst this report uses figures as reported to cabinet at quarter 1 of 2023/24 as the base point to which changes arising from this report are then summarised (in table B) the overall high needs block DSG position will be updated quarterly and further reported to cabinet in the quarterly finance monitoring report with the next update being for quarter 2 due at Cabinet on the 6th December.

A number of key assumptions have been made with the service, when looking at the High Needs Block future predictions, which are summarised below.

- The new provision extensions set out in the recommendations, identified in paragraph 20, for Key stage 2, 3 and 4 Alternative Provision (AP) numbers are due to increase overall to 100 with provision moving onto the Specialist Education (SE) framework from September 24 when current expectation is for it to be commissioned directly at that point. The places at Big Picture from January 24 to August 24 are expected to increase up to 100, including transition support, with estimated payments to be based on outcomes in line with current contract. An estimate of 60 places (40 inreach and 20 outreach) to be provided from Jan 24 and 100 places (40 inreach and 60 outreach) places from April 24, with the report setting out up to 100 places maximum attracting outcomes payments). These additional places and outreach support to pupils are expected to mitigate any further Special Educational Needs (SEN) Out of Area net growth. Earlier intervention and assessment expected to identify and provide young people with additional support to be able to remain within mainstream school, however there is also an assumption that current Alternative Provision (AP) places will still be required to support mainstream school earlier in the system.
- Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) top up funding for mainstream schools is expected to be fully devolved from September 2024 with baseline funding expected to be set at current 23/24 level (£6.7m) plus inflation.
- Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) funding for tuition, alternative provision (AP) or other provision for Special Educational Needs (SEN) children assumed to continue at 23/24 levels plus inflation.
- Special school funding (pre-16) and additional top up (for needs above regular top-up funding amounts) are not projected to increase in future years i.e. continue at 23/24 levels plus inflation.
- Key Stage 2 preventative places currently being funded are to reduce from 24/25 following transitional funding period to March 24.
- Specialist autism and hospital funding to remain the same with no growth in places except up to 10 additional places identified within the report from April 24.
- Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) Hub's funding agreed for 40 places at 4 schools following 23/24 academic year opening, with savings already included against Special Educational Needs (SEN) out of authority placements from reducing net growth through avoidance of placements through use of placements in these Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) provisions.
- Additional post 16 provision of 36 places which would make a direct savings against post 16 Specialist Post-16 Institution (SPI).
- Entering into any contracts for additional provisions mentioned within the report are still subject to separate decision records in line with Councils Financial Procedure rules, linking also to any associated capital investment required. Additional placements in existing provisions or through the existing alternative provision framework will be considered as part of individual children's' placement panel decisions.
- Internal staff teams funded through the high needs block Designated Schools Grant (DSG) funding are currently expected to remain at current staffing levels with any reductions arising through partners in Doncaster developing an alternative model as mentioned in the report would need to be costed separately when known, or reviews that may arise through 'Delivering Better Value' (DBV) work to offset £2m 'Delivering Better Value' (DBV) saving included above.
- It is assumed that the High Needs block funding from government will only increase by 3% in future years as per Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

The capital budget setting report mentioned within this report

Table B – revised position on High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant

| Description | 2022/23 £000's | 2023/24 £000's | 2024/25 £000's | 2025/26 £000's | 2026/27 £000's |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Designated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block grant (after deductions) | 41,173 | 47,761 | 49,672 | 51,389 | 53,158 |
| High Needs Block expenditure | 48,613 | 53,743 | 54,956 | 55,091 | 56,038 |
| In year High Needs Block variance (less other Designated Schools Grant (DSG) underspends) | 6,186 | 5,981 | 5,285 | 3,702 | 2,880 |
| Overall DSG Balance | 20,003 | 26,046 | 31,331 | 35,033 | 37,914 |

Capital Implications

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy cabinet report approved by cabinet on the 16th November 2022 agreed to delegate decisions around how to allocate the balance of capital funding within the terms and conditions of the grant, alongside other associated revenue decisions to the Director Children, Young People and Families and the Director of Corporate Resources in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education, Skills and Young People.

Any capital decisions detailed within this report will require approval of a separate Officer Decision record in conjunction with the approval given within the above cabinet decision.

Doncaster City Council has received a High Needs Capital Grant of £8,140,934 over the period 2021-22 to 2023-24 to be spent on High Needs Capital Projects, which will cover the proposed estimated capital investment of £4.4m, detailed within paragraph 22 of this report, summarised in table below:

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Proposed capital investment costs (subject to approval) | £ |
| To refurbish Hillside Academy. | 507,212 |
| To develop Post 16 provision and build extra capacity within local specialist provision for those with complex need. | 1,519,741 |
| Development of increased enhanced resource provision (Autistic spectrum disorder and SEMH). | 1,200,000 |
| To support increased SEND capacity at mainstream sites. | 1,200,000 |
| | <u>4,426,953</u> |

34. Human Resources Implications [Officer Initials: JC | Date: 10/10/2023]

There are no direct HR implications associated with this report

35. Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW | Date:11/10/2023]

Digital and ICT have been working with the third-party supplier to implement the EHCP online portal. There are no other specific technology implications relating to this report. However, Digital and ICT must be consulted where there are any arising technology implications to support the future vision, approach and model for developing equitable and inclusive education.

36. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Risk: Actions within this strategy will not be delivered on time and this will exacerbate existing pressures.

Mitigation: Our implementation plan sets out clear milestones and outcomes which are monitored by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Learning Provision and Organisation Boards. Where there is doubt regarding delivery of buildings, mitigations will be built into plans to ensure that cohorts are not without provision if a lag occurs.

37. CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place formally through Autumn 22 and Spring 23 with all key stakeholders. We have continued to do this via our head teachers' groups, partnership meetings and sessions with parents, carers and young people. We will also work with key strategic groups such as Schools Forum in order to further gain views on these developments.

38. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy -

[Doncaster SEND Strategy 2022-2025 v10.pdf \(windows.net\)](#)

November 2022: Cabinet report. Doncaster SEND Strategy:

[Agenda Item No \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

39. GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)

Multi-academy trust (MAT),

Department for Education (DFE)

Alternative Provision (AP)

Specialist Education (SE)

Doncaster Delivering Together (DDT)
Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
Mental Health Support Teams (MHST)
General Developmental Assessment (GDA)
Further Education (FE)
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

40. REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Martyn Owen, Head of Service SEND Transformation

Martyn.owen@doncaster.gov.uk

Jane Reed, Head of Education and Skills

Jane.cresswell@doncaster.gov.uk

Leanne Hornsby, Assistant Director, Education and Skills

Leanne.hornsby@doncaster.gov.uk

Riana Nelson
Director, Children, Young People and Families