

High Needs Block Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
29th January 2016 10am-12 noon. PDC

Present

Martin Doyle Headteacher Riverside School – Chair
Deborah Tucker: Alternative Provisions Commissioning Lead
Vikki Monk-Meyer: Head of Service: Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
Steve Worth: Schools Finance
Gordon McEwan: Tuition Service
Margaret Sumner: Headteacher Brook School
Tony Hartley: Headteacher Gladesmore School
Mike McKenzie: Headteacher Alexandra Park School
Marion McCarthy: Governor Heartlands High School
Ngozi Anuforo: Commissioning
Sarah Hargreaves: Clerk

Apologies Received from

Yvonne Wade : Principal Educational Psychologist
Melian Mansfield: Pembury House Chair
Herbie Spence: 6th Form Centre Head of Centre
Michael Connah: Governor Riverside School
Katherine Heffernan: Children & Schools Finance. Head of Service

Also Present

David Tully: Finance Support to Vikki Monk-Meyer
Gareth Morgan: Early Help. Head of Service

The Chair welcomed everyone present to the meeting. Apologies were noted.
It was **agreed** to vary the order of the agenda to take the budget presentation first.

1. Minutes and Matters Arising

- 1.1 The minutes of 15th December were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. Signed by the Chair and returned to Vikki for filing.
- 1.2 Pt 1.5 The discussion on the 30 hours childcare sufficiency will be taken at the Early Years sub-group and not at this meeting,
- 1.3 Pt 2.4.1 The admission criteria for special schools and the Tuition Service will be carried over to the next meeting. **Action V MM**
- 1.4 Pt 2.5 Gordon will arrange a trip to the Tuition Service if members are interested. Gordon to email possible dates around. **Action G McE**
The Chair remarked that following the previous presentation he had referred a pupil with complex needs to the Tuition Service. The placement was going well.

1.4.1 Members discussed the fact that the Tuition Service & Heartlands between them were effectively offering an in-year fair access panel. Several pupils will be considered at the SEN panel in 2 weeks time.

1.5 Pt 4 Ceri May is speaking to Jon Abbey and the NLCs regarding funding for her project.

1.6 Pt 4.5 There are 6 NLCs (not 4 as stated).

2.0 Back to Balance Plan for the HNB

2.1 There is a shortfall of £678,000 in the 2015/16 budget. The budget will either have to balance over time or to found from elsewhere within the HNB. Additional money is not available.

2.2 Whilst the proportion of funding going to the independent and voluntary sector is not unusual, unlike in other boroughs it is rising rather than falling. Particular pressure in on post 19 places.

2.2.2 There are waiting lists for places. The likely demand for places has been mapped over the next 3 years.

2.3 There are several interventions being considered to balance the budget:

a) bringing children back in borough to reduce overall costs

b) Portage (an early intervention programme for young children with complex needs which is used by families at home) will reduce the number of children who go on to require specialist interventions and places, or at least delay the need for such places. Forty children can be catered for at any one time by the team.

c) Early Help. Many of these pupils already have EHC plans; including several in out borough and independent placements (37:60). (There is concern however that some of these children are not receiving sufficient support).

d) better and more cost effective transitioning into adult services.

e) staff changes; which will allow for better monitoring of out borough placements

f) incrementally increasing the number of places in The Grove

g) increasing the number of post 19 places. Although there will be a short term cost, longer term it would be cost effective. There is a consistent demand for places. CoNEL is not suitable for all learners. Post 19 places generate severe budgetary pressures.

h) re-using existing premises, for example the old HALS building, to become annexes of existing provision eg Riverside School was discussed as a development opportunity.

2.3.1 The intention is not to remove the use of out borough placements, but to use them selectively where they can offer an additional service. They would become the exception rather than the rule. Parents would be encouraged to use in-borough placements.

2.3.2 It will be necessary to factor in provision space eg. when Tribunals are won against OOB providers and pupils have to be placed in borough,

2.3.3 Members **agreed** that the changes would need to be across all age groups and all providers; there is no single remedy to the budget issues.

- 2.4 The draft strategy documents will be circulated to be read by all. **Action V MM, All**
- 2.4.1 Vikki asked that members contribute both pro-active and reactive suggestions to her to be used in a proposal to inform commissioning. The group to consider if they would be prepared to be representatives on a commissioning strategy group or if Catherine Swale Vulnerable Children's Commissioner should be invited to the High Needs Block .
Action All
- 2.4.2 Members asked if Catherine Swale, the Vulnerable Children's Commissioner at the CCG should be invited to contribute. Vikki to discuss with her. **Action V MM**
- 2.4.1 It was **agreed** that the admission criteria for the special schools and the tuition service should be reviewed at the next meeting. **Action Vikki, Clerk**
- 2.5 The proposal of a three year licensed deficit was discussed. Although the current deficit of £678K is anticipated to increase to £807K next year, with the savings identified above it is profiled to reduce over 3 years.
- 2.5.1 There is a non schools DSG reserve which can be used.
- 2.5.2 It has been assumed that any staff vacancies arising are filled.
- 2.5.3 It was confirmed that the funding regime is due to change in 2017.for secondary schools
- 2.5.4 A proposal needs to go to Schools Forum on **25th Feb** regarding the funding and how the HNB will operate. A draft proposal will be circulated next week. All are asked to feedback to Vikki and Steve Worth. **Action All, V MM, SW**
- 2.5.5 There will be an additional £447,000 available next year; it is this year that there is the large overspend.
- 2.5.6 If after 3 years there was still a deficit the money would have to come out of the school budget share as the DSG is ring-fenced, or further consideration would need to be made for the services funded within the HNB and if these would continue at the same level or cease .
- 2.6 Steve Worth clarified the following:
 - The Grove is funded via the EFA as it is a Free School (the LA provides top-up). There are financial advantages to being a special needs free school.
 - Simmons House is funded for 12 places
 - alternative provision place funding has increased from £8,000 to £10,000
 - SEND funding to secondary schools goes straight out from the LA.
- 2.7 Members queried the effectiveness of the Markfield project. Vikki asked all present to email any concerns to her. **Action All.**
- 3.0 Additional support for children aged 0-4: Ngozi Anuforo**
- 3.1 Children aged 2,3,4 years are funded through the HNB for their additional needs. There is money available for this year for early years. However, providers need to be clear as to the thresholds being applied to the element 3 (top-up) funding to enable them to access the funding.
- 3.2 Additionally work will be undertaken on what funding will remain centrally with the LA and what will be distributed to schools, given the central funding of places held within

three of the nurseries. The possibility of double funding needs to be borne in mind, eg. if a pupil were to receive additional support within an existing placement this would need to be justified through an assessment,. It is anticipated that the majority of children attending the pre commissioned places in the three nurseries would likely to go onto require special school places. We would be looking at where parents choose to send their children over time and agree if this strategy of pre commissioned places or top up would gradually combine into top up only in all settings We would need to migrate to this approach if it seemed suitable however

Action

NA, SW, V MM

- 3.2.2 Members discussed the implications of children only being able to start at school at certain points in the year.
- 3.3 It is proposed that there are 3 tiers of funding with an hourly cost associated with each:
Universal needs
Medium needs
High needs
A paper with further details will be drafted and circulated. **Action NA**
- 3.4 Staff in a range of settings need to be offered training to increase their confidence in meeting the need of children with more complex SEN and disabilities
- 3.5 The idea of developing a special needs nursery instead of pre-commissioned places was explored .
- 4.0 Early Help (EH): Gareth Morgan**
- 4.1 Early Help is an early years and preventative family support programme. 30% of the families being supported by EH are also receiving services via the HNB; as they have at least one child with SEND. The current caseload is 392 of which 100 are children with SEN or disability; All include a child aged 0-18.
- 4.1.2 It is a practical, hands-on service running between 8am-8pm and includes behaviour management, parenting, setting routines, how to engage with authority figures. It is outcome focused and time limited to 6 months intervention. It operates across the borough, although the SEND element in each area needs to be confirmed. **Action GM**
- 4.2 The funding, which is unlikely to increase over time, is currently:
£350,000 DSG
£1.2 directly from the Dept of Communities and Local Government (Troubled Families stream)
£985,000 core LA budget
£1,000,000 High Needs Block
- 4.2.1 Members asked if these proportions were reflected in the caseload referrals. After discussion it was felt that this was the case.
- 4.3 In order to capture more accurately the benefit of the project and the demographic of the families worked with a new approach has been used since Oct 2015 to record

information. In the past it was mainly individuals who were worked with; the intention now is to be more family focused.

4.3.1 Members asked that information be collated by the school attended and family make-up.

4.3.2 Data will be shared with schools and the NLCs. The Chair asked for case studies to be shared showing the impact of the project. **Action GM**

4.3.3 It was stressed that schools should be kept informed of families within their school community who are receiving support. It was agreed that this would be possible. **Action GM**

4.4 Gareth agreed that links with mainstream schools need to be developed more. (Special schools should be receiving help from elsewhere). As at December 2015 all secondary schools and 58% of primaries were being worked with.

4.4

4.5 the Sub-Committee endorsed the HNB expenditure on Early Help for next year but would need evidence of impact before agreeing contributions in future years

5. AOB

5.1 The minutes from Schools Forum will be made available to this committee and brief feedback given on each meeting.

5.2 The outcomes from the additional meeting held on January 5th to consider budgetary items were included in the budget papers discussed above.

5.3 A new primary school rep. is needed. All to consider possible people. **Action All**

5.4 Membership of this committee should be a standing agenda item. **Action Chair, Clerk**

Date of next meeting: **8th March 10am**. Venue TBC

Signed

Date