



Report title: Educational Sufficiency Strategy

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Tuesday, 27 June 2023

Cabinet Portfolio Holder: Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education

Report of: Director of Children's Services

Public or private: Open

Key Decision?: Y, is likely to lead to significant expenditure or savings within a service area, or one that is likely to have a significant impact on the life of a community within the Borough.

Published on the Forward Plan: Y

1. Report summary

- 1.1 The report introduces the new Education Sufficiency Strategy and seeks the formal adoption of the document as a good and timely strategy for sufficiency of educational placements across both the mainstream and Special Educational Needs sector of the schools estate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the report and approve the Education Sufficiency Strategy as the formal strategy for education placements across the mainstream and Special Educational Needs sector.

3. Reason for recommendation

- 3.1 Rochdale Council has a statutory duty under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure there is a sufficiency of school places available to meet the needs of all children and young people living within our authority. This includes having regard to the need to secure provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In addition, section 315 of the Education Act 1996 requires that arrangements for children with SEND be kept under review.
- 3.2 This strategy covers school place planning for mainstream and SEN school capacity and details how Rochdale is connected to the wider Greater Manchester, GM, school place sufficiency strategies.

4. Alternatives considered

- 4.1 Proposals are put forward in line with pupil place planning priorities and commitments approved in previous Cabinet reports. A suite of plans with

alternatives is given in the strategy in order to foresee decisions outside of council control. Failure to have an adopted strategy for educational placements could negatively impact oversight and apparent oversight as considered in the Ofsted framework.

5. Key information

- 5.1 The strategy outlines how Rochdale Council's educational strategy aligns with GM wide strategies as particularly the SEN element crosses boundaries as specialist centres for the whole range of SEN needs are scattered across the wider region.
- 5.2 The strategy is contextualised by the post-covid environment in the schools system. It details both the response of the council's support through the pandemic, and the areas in which more needs to be done for the school's system to fully recover back to pre-covid levels of both need and other such metrics such as school attendance.
- 5.3 The strategy sits within a framework of other strategies and reports, such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Autism strategy, and the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Alliance Strategy.
- 5.4 Recover of the SEN deficit is reliant on the implementation of the educational sufficiency outcomes because of the current reliance on the costly Independent and Non-maintained school's sector.
- 5.5 The strategic outcomes for the Educational Sufficiency for SEN are :

1	Post covid Issues	Actions
1.1	Covid has increased the number of Primary aged pupils with EHCP's for SLCN and the LA should look to open a SEN Provision/Unit to work with children with developmental delays before plans are put in place.	Development of intervention places for commissioned short term placements for language and Communications developmental delays. Ideally 3 units across the borough.
1.2	There should be a particular focus on SEMH pupils with SEN support whose numbers have jumped up due to covid.	The LA has already commissioned Right-to-succeed to work with schools on their AP offer with a particular focus on reducing absence and exclusions. BLC are currently expanding into a fourth site (St Albans House) while their extension at the Darnhill site is being built. – An additional 40 places.
2	Current – On Going Issues	Actions
2.1	Increase numbers of pupils in mainstream special units/hubs/provisions to the national average of 5%. Provisions should focus on ASD and SEMH at Primary and Secondary.	At Primary another 26 places in hubs/units/provisions are needed to bring Rochdale up to average. Discussions have started with one school and are planned with another. With t e Secondary cohort

		along with the Redwood ASD hub at Matthew Moss a further 17 places are needed to meet average.
2.2	Manage current ASD placements to facilitate successful opening of the new Rochdale ASD school: 75 place school	The current Rochdale ASD hub at Hollinwood will take a second cohort for September 2023. The LA has opened a discussion with a mainstream Secondary to consider an ASD hub for 2024 intake who will then transfer to the new ASD school.
2.3	Increase places for specialist AP provision in the borough to address current shortage of places	Support AP with Hollingworth MAT for new AP school. Consider expansion of Brownhill PRS section onto a new site.
2.4	Facilitate new secondary and tertiary SEMH school: 60 place school, to reduce out of borough and independent costs	Await decision on bid. Secure a site and start process of finding a suitable trust. Alternative is the expansion and re-configuration of Brownhill into a fourth site (as above).
2.5	SEND commissioning has been a focus across GM because of a shortage of places and the need to avoid increased prices through a bidding process. A reduction in places commissioned in the independent and non-maintained sector is needed long term.	Processes have been put in place to better coordinate the commissioning of SEND places. Work around reduction in commissioned places is dependent on more in-borough specialist places.
3	Addressing the High Needs Deficit	Actions
3.1	Non-maintained and Independent Special schools have become the default option for parents requesting special schools and are large percentage of current High Needs spend. These types of schools will always be needed but in-area maintained special schools are a better option and are preferred by parents where available.	Opening of 3 new schools as detailed above will help to increase the number of maintained special school places by 75 in the new ASD school, 60 in a new SEMH or additional Brownhill school, and 60 in the new AP school. This would increase places, using the High Needs Benchmarking tool metric, to approximately 1.7 additional places per 1000 of the aged 2-18 population (figure 17). Meeting the 5% target on Units/Provisions will create more special places and improve outcomes for children.
4	Forward Looking Plans	Actions
4.1	The change in the law to cover age 0-25 has created a cohort of pupils who	Put a systematic review process in place to review and cease plans at

	have had successful journeys through the school system and move on to mainstream college and / or employment. Ceasing plans for these young adults to focus time and resources on those in need will streamline the service.	age 19+ where it is appropriate to do so.
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5.6 The strategic outcomes for the Educational Sufficiency for mainstream schools are :

Issues - Primary	Actions
Heywood, Northern and Central Rochdale currently have too much spare capacity	Consultations have been completed to reduce Published Admission Number at three schools in these areas
North Pennine – too many spaces/under recruitment	Recruitment of pupils and key stage 2 leavers are affecting some local schools as the area awaits its two new DfE build schools; a Primary school and a new Secondary school.
Middleton – high rates on in-flow from new housing is causing considerable pressure on schools	A new year 2 class was opened in Autumn 2022, and a new Reception class has been approved for September 2023 in existing accommodation.
Heywood and South Rochdale will have considerable new housing associated with the Places for Everyone	Two sites for the new schools have been found and consultations on opening schools through the Free school Presumption have been completed
Issues - Secondary	Actions
The LA is working with local Secondary schools to manage the projected deficit in places until the new Littleborough (north Pennine) school opens. The LA is working with DfE and Star Academies trust to facilitate the opening of the school	Awaiting notification from DfE.
Places for Everyone	Actions
Current plans will need to be kept under review with the 12,000 new houses in the programme.	Work with Secondary schools when additional places are needed. Some schools have continued to take additional places with funding to create additional Basic Need capacity.

6. Finance

- 6.1 Funding for mainstream capital works to expand school places comes from DfE Basic Need grant allocations, which supports the provision of new pupil places at existing schools.

6.2 Funding from the expansion of the SEN places comes from the DfE High Needs Capital allocation

7. Legal

7.1 Under the Education Act 1996, section 14(1) the Local Authority has a duty to secure sufficient school places and is also the strategic commissioner for new school places in its area. This includes having regard to the need to secure provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In addition, section 315 of the Education Act 1996 requires that arrangements for children with SEND be kept under review.

7.2 The local authority shall exercise their functions under this legislation to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education, and secondary education and, in the case of a local authority in England, further education, are available to meet the needs of the population of their area.

8. Human resource

8.1 Two scenarios for any additional staff funded through school's revenue (High Needs Block and Dedicated School's Grant) include funding to schools and academies to undertake to directly employ additional staff, or through posts to support SEN pupils within Rochdale Additional Needs service. Such staff will be employed under current schools/academy's or council's standard contracts.

9. Sustainability impact

9.1 See Attached

10. Other considerations (corporate priorities, risks)

10.1 As above

Background Papers:

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