

## High Needs Working Group – 19/10/2023

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

2p.m. to 3p.m.

<b>Attendees:</b>			
Fiona Robinson (FR) <b>Chair</b>	Headteacher – Bensham Manor	✓	
Sarah Bailey (SB)	Head of Access to Education	X	
Kathy Roberts (KR)	Head of Service, SEND Transformation & Delivery	✓	
Mark Southworth (MS)	Consultant Lead, Locality Inclusion Project	✓	
Charles Quaye (CQ)	Finance Manager Education	✓	
Keran Currie (KC)	School Governor – Norbury Manor Primary School	X	
Katie Goodwin (KG)	Headteacher – St Nicolas'	✓	
Helene Greenidge (HG)	Senco Assessor – John Ruskin College	X	
Clare Cranham (CC)	Headteacher – Kensington Avenue	✓	
Julie Evans (JE)	Headteacher – Priory	X	
Shelley Davies (SD)	Director of Education	X	
Jackie Wright (JW)	Travel Assistance Commissioner, Deputy Head of Independent Travel	✓	
Daniel Shepherd (DS)	Head of Independent Travel	✓	
Darran Money (DM)	Education Business Support Lead	X	
Mori Bates (MB)	Clerk	✓	

### Agenda Items

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies and welcome</b>	FR
	Apologies received by MB from JE, KC and SD	
<b>2</b>	<b>Previous Minutes and Actions</b>	FR
	<p>2.1 Previous minutes read and reviewed – agreed to be a true record.</p> <p>2.2 Due to the ongoing discussion in the differences between the MNS and PVIs where the CLSS is concerned, an agenda item will be added for the next High Needs Working Group – <b>ACTION Discharged</b> – MB will co-ordinate with the involved parties to answer any further questions due to the busy nature of future working groups</p>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Safety Valve Update</b>	KR
	<p>3.1 KR presented an overview of updates for the Safety Valve.</p> <p>3.2 Overall, there has been a lot of reporting and scrutinizing of figures in order to secure investment. There is a financial targeted deficit of £725K from the Safety Valve and the service is currently reporting a projected position of in-year deficit of £705K overspend following September intake data and forecast updated.</p>	

	<p>3.3 Currently, we are aiming to work with the Education Strategic Partnership Board and conduct meetings with them in order to continue developing a relationship with key players.</p> <p>3.4 An expansion in mainstream and special school sectors can occur by investing in those schools, which will in turn create more spaces, whilst simultaneously reducing overspend.</p> <p>3.5 KR reported that there is initial site planning for 20 place primary mainstream ELP for pupils with ASD scheduled to open in April '24 following The Crescent opening in October '23.</p> <p>3.6 A detailed risk register has been used to analyse the impacts and mitigations of various actions or plans by using a RAG rating. All factors show as either green or yellow, indicating those risks either require monitoring or management and monitoring on a less time critical frame.</p> <p>3.7 A report for Safety Valve was submitted in December '23 but there has not yet been a response following this. Feedback will follow shortly and once it is received, it will be circulated to the wider working group.</p> <p><b>Q1:</b> MS: In the past, money has been received in stages – have they greenlighted any future payments yet?  <b>A1:</b> KR: They will have to review the report and go from there regarding any decision making about future payments.</p> <p>3.8 KR confirmed that the document containing the update notes will be circulated post-meeting.</p>	
4	<b>Ofsted SEND Monitoring Visit Update</b>	KR
	<p>4.1 New framework for Ofsted inspection was published in July, with the first inspection being conducted against this taking place in February. The framework will be used in addition to the existing.</p> <p>4.2 KR confirmed that new templates have been distributed to schools relating to the three questions that could be asked during a visit.</p> <p>4.3 KR noted that there will be invitations being sent out in due course seeking representation for future meetings due to take place centring around Ofsted visits. The aim is to build a strong board that will help to show our strengths and how we can improve upon our weaknesses.</p>	
5	<b>High Needs Outturn Forecast end of quarter report</b>	CQ
	<p>5.1 CQ presented a report on the High Needs Outturn Forecast (end of quarter) for which will go to Schools Forum. The working group noted the Q3 Forecast Outturn position for 23/24 and the significant risks that were identified in the report.</p> <p>5.2 There is a focus on value for money as a balanced budget provides assurance to the DfE that the funds received are being distributed in accordance with the conditions imposed by the grant.</p> <p>5.3 In order to create a most robust report, CQ welcomed members of the working group to challenge the information provided. It was noted that in some area where there is an overlap between Early Years and High Needs, High Needs appears to be contributing more.</p> <p>5.4 There will be a possibility that figures will change, as they have been known to in the past, as pupil counts shift. One reason for a potential change is the academisation of schools.</p> <p>5.5 If the overspend is the predicted at £725K, then we would look to receive £3.29million this year. Taking this into account, by the end of the financial year, we are looking to have a deficit of -£12.799million. The possible risks for not achieving such a target may be the demand and also the needs of the children attending schools in the borough that live out of the borough. Therefore, we need to be aware of these factors where the grant is concerned.</p> <p><b>Q2:</b> FR: If we were to tell the DfE that there have been 100+ children that have moved in and started at our schools, will the figures be revised?  <b>A2:</b> CQ: Such a drastic change in pupil numbers would defeat the purpose of the agreement that has already been signed and agreed upon.</p>	

	<p><b>A2:</b> KR: Throughout the application, transparency is required. As long as we can evidence that we are on track, that is helpful. The DfE could accept an amendment, but when nationally, there are so many councils with High needs Deficit, the same would have to be offered to those localities as well. High Needs has been underfunded for a long time now.</p> <p>5.6 A discussion followed centring around transport, which was picked up upon in more detail under agenda item 7.</p> <p>5.7 CQ reiterated that there are lots of units in need of more funding within the locality such as Therapies, the CLSS and SEND so we need to factor into the budget as a possible eventuality.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Forecast End of Year</b>	CQ
	<p>6.1 CQ explained that the Forecast End of Year presentation was combined with the Outturn report. It was suggested that an additional meeting take place on the 9<sup>th</sup> February for a budget paper for 30 minutes or so. CQ would email FR regarding this.</p> <p>6.2 Post Meet: An additional meeting will take place on the 5<sup>th</sup> February.</p>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Transport Issues</b>	FR
	<p>7.1 Throughout the working group, as DS and JW were invited, there was discussion surrounding the transport issues and what could be done to help them. JW commented that even with five additional drivers, they are still not able to meet the demand and need.</p> <p>7.2 DS discussed the budget from a transport perspective and the impacts of the budget on it. The transport budget is also overspent, meaning that there may be a time where a further meeting is required focused on this.</p> <p>7.3 The rise in need for transport has been drastic – over the last two years, there has been an increase of 28.5% in EHCPs and a 14.8% increase in SEN transportation needs. These increases are not sustainable from a transport perspective and so would look to have a portion of the Safety Valve grant to accommodate the demand.</p> <p>7.4 CQ responded that it is a combination of trying to meet the needs of the children and analysing the data behind the statistics. He queried the criteria in place that were used to ascertain if a pupil qualified for SEN transport and whether mileage came into effect.</p> <p>7.5 JW explained that the transport budget is also tight and even the discretionary funds have been removed. It is also important to note that it is also about the abilities of the pupils themselves, rather than the mileage. As it is a statutory duty to offer transport, this is not something that can be stopped.</p> <p>7.6 CQ commented the collaborative working will aid the working groups and the wider departments. The money goes into a general fund and the DfE can go back and question transactions, depending on what type of payments are being distributed.</p> <p>7.7 It was agreed that a focus session may be needed specifically on SEN transport.</p>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Therapies Commissioning Update</b>	SP
	<p>8.1 A verbal update on the therapies in place of Shelley Prince. There have been delays in procedure due to a national reconfiguration of ICBs and their structures. We are trying to keep a forward momentum and can confirm a provider has been found. In the meantime, interim arrangements are in place and once a funding pot has been arranged, there will be more opportunities.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<b>SEND Locality Update</b>	MS

	<p>9.1 MS presented a powerpoint containing some updates on the SEND locality and CLSS, including some recent updates to the CLSS terms of reference such as clarity on the maximum annual funding being £6,000, approximately £2,000 a term.</p> <p>9.2 Expenditures have been recorded for April to December, for which it is expected that we should be at two thirds spent. Currently, that is where we are at, with the exception of Selsdon (81.9% spent), Thornton Heath (69.2% spent) and Central Croydon (68.6% spent) although some of these localities have been in the CLSS for a longer period and so are potentially utilising their funding to the best of their abilities. We will continue to work with all the localities in order to ensure the money is being appropriately distributed.</p> <p>9.3 MS confirmed that we are now using an Improved Costed Provision Mapping Tool to help reduce the workload of SENCOs in the area, along with a "Provided and Requested" spreadsheet to help monitor where provisions are.</p> <p><b>Q3:</b> JW: Is there a reason as to why the expenditure for Thornton Heath is so low, at 24%?  <b>A3:</b> MS: Thornton Heath has been a part of the CLSS for three years and so they are a little more</p> <p>9.4 KR added that there is a lot of invaluable data that should be taken into account with the application process. Data that can illustrate the way the areas of education are interconnected and greatly affected by each other, such as High Needs and the CLSS.</p>	
10	<b>AOB:</b>	
	No AOB	

<b>AGREED ACTIONS</b>		
Actions from previous minutes		

**Next Meeting Date – TBD**