

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

Agenda item	Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee recommendations (10 March 2021)	Response
Response from Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills – Mr Nigel Jupp		
Inclusion in West Sussex	1. Thanks officers and schools for the progress they have made on the implementation of the SEND and Inclusion strategy 2019-24, recognising the delivery of outcomes should be considered in the context of the impact of Covid-19. The Committee welcomes the co-creation of the Strategy and is assured that those children who do not have a SEND diagnosis but are at risk of exclusion are not precluded.	Noted
	2. Notes the importance of measuring outcomes and the impact of the SEND and Inclusion strategy on children and young people and requests that the progress update on the Strategy due in the Autumn is shared with the Committee to seek assurance that outcomes are being delivered and identify any potential areas for scrutiny.	I agree with the Committee on the importance of measuring the outcomes and impact of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy on the children and young people in West Sussex and will arrange for the progress update to be shared with Committee members when it is available.
	3. Is glad to hear of the ongoing work to focus on professional development in teacher training and training for all school staff and governors to bring a more consistent level of awareness of	Noted

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

Agenda item	Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee recommendations (10 March 2021)	Response
	SEND and inclusion across all schools in West Sussex.	
	4. Recognises the importance of identifying the issues of SEND in children and early as possible and supports the move of Early Years to Education and Skills so that this can be strengthened.	Noted
	5. Agrees on the importance of a consistent framework for the assessment and outcomes of Education Health and Care Plans. The Committee supports the development of SENCO representation on EHCP assessment panels and that work continues with schools to identify and address inconsistencies.	Noted
	6. Welcomes the ongoing work to share best practice on SEND and Inclusion and support for children at risk of exclusion. The Committee suggests a framework for schools could be developed to ensure best practice is shared and a consistent pathway for children at risk of exclusion is provided across West Sussex schools.	The 'Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice' Framework has been developed by our inclusion team and outcomes of this are already being drawn together to share best practice through the SEND network events.
	7. Recommends that the department works directly with schools with higher than average rate of	This is already the case and the establishing of a partnership with secondary schools to provide preventative programmes

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

Agenda item	Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee recommendations (10 March 2021)	Response
	exclusions and/or managed moves to identify what support is needed to keep more children learning within the school.	for those at risk of exclusion is a step towards supporting those schools through earlier intervention.
	8. Highlights the importance of developing the Special Support Centres (SSCs) and new special schools at pace, and requests that these are prioritised in the Capital Programme to ensure there is the provision of improved learning opportunities and experiences for SEND learners and to reduce the pressure on the High Needs Block. The Committee further suggests the exploration of provision of SSCs or similar units for children without SEND diagnosis.	An email was written to the Cabinet Member for Finance in regard to the prioritisation and development of SSCs. The email and response are provided at the end of this report.
	9. Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills continues to lobby government on the review of the High Needs Block to reflect the extension of SEND up to the age of 25.	I will continue to lobby government on this important issue. The outcome of the government's SEND review, that was delayed from last year due to the pandemic, is expected to be published by this summer. The review aimed to look at the impact of the reforms introduced in 2014 to better support SEND children and young people. Following this publication, it is also expected that a Department for Education consultation on the future funding of the High Needs Block will take place later this year which will provide an opportunity for the County Council to input its views for consideration.

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

Agenda item	Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee recommendations (10 March 2021)	Response
Response from Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Mrs Jacquie Russell		
Children First Improvement Update	1. Welcomes the continuing pace and progress of the Children First Improvement Programme to provide improved outcomes for children and young people as reflected in the recent Commissioner update and thanks the staff and leadership for the ongoing progress.	Noted
	2. Agrees to explore focusing on specific areas of the Improvement Programme at future Committee meetings, particularly where the Committee can provide useful input to assist with the ongoing improvement journey. The Committee agrees that one of these areas should include social worker workforce proposals as part of the Family Safeguarding Model and will explore further areas of focus at its Business Planning Group.	Noted
	3. Highlights the importance of engagement with all children and young people and families, to ensure their voice is heard, in the co-production of services and that the Committee continues to be updated on this work.	I agree that the voice of children, young people and families are key to ensuring we deliver the right services for our residents and will welcome the opportunity to update the committee on the development of this work and the impact it is having at a future meeting.

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

Agenda item	Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee recommendations (10 March 2021)	Response
	4. Welcomes the offer from the service to use County Councillors as a communication channel to the local community on key messages from the service, including the 'see something, say something' Campaign.	Noted. County Councillors have a key role to play in providing key messages from the service to residents within their local communities, and information will continue to be communicated to all Councillors through emails, the member bulletin and member briefings.

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

Response to Recommendation 8: Inclusion in West Sussex from the Cabinet Member for Finance:

Email to Cabinet Member for Finance:

24 May 2021

Dear Jeremy,

During the discussion on the Capital Programme Quarterly Update Report at the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee meeting on 11 March, I committed to writing to you to expand on my Committee's request to explore the acceleration and prioritisation of Special Support Centres in Schools in the Capital Programme.

At the last CYPSSC meeting, the Committee considered an item on Inclusion in West Sussex. As has been previously raised by the PFSC Committee, the pressure on the High Needs Block was discussed and the Committee highlighted the need to continue to lobby government on this issue. The Committee recognised the increasing number of EHCPs which is adding to the pressure on the High Needs Block. There is also an increase in high cost placements in the independent sector which is further contributing to this.

The Committee recognised that the expansion of Special Support Centres, along with the increase in special school provision, will assist in reducing the overspend, as well as provide better provision for children in West Sussex. The SSCs currently in the capital programme are due to be delivered by September 2023, and therefore the Committee wanted to explore what possibility there was to accelerate these projects as well as prioritise the development of SSCs in the Capital Programme to reduce the pressure on the High Needs Block as well as provide improved learning opportunities and experiences for SEND learners.

I would very much welcome your comments on the above which I will share with my Committee.

Best wishes

Cllr Stephen Hillier

Interim Chairman of Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

Email Response from Cabinet Member for Finance:

16 June 2021

Dear Stephen

Thank you for your e-mail dated the 24 May 2021 and the opportunity of updating you on the progress on the delivery of the Special Support Centres (SSC). As you can imagine these are complex projects that involve the integration of construction works with the day-to-day operation of a school or college.

As a reminder I have set out the full programme of SSCs and their current status:

School	Project Type	Status	Delivery Date	Comments
+ SEND Programme – Special Support Centres				
St Margaret's	Special Support Centre	In Design	May 23	On Target
Edward Bryant	Special Support Centre	In Design	Aug 23	School has asked for additional options to be considered
Worthing High	Special Support Centre	On Hold	N/A	Pending the outcome of the Academy's CIF bid for expansion and SSC
Felpham	Special Support Centre	In Design	Aug 23	On target

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

School	Project Type	Status	Delivery Date	Comments
Maidenbower Infants	Special Support Centre	In Design	July 23	Design progressing with C&FC refurbishment. Delivery of project with C&FC option subject to Early Help consultation outcomes
Three Bridges	Special Support Centre	On Hold	N/A	Cancelled on instruction of the SEND team
Ifield CC	Special Support Centre	In preparation	TBC	No programme received from PFI Provider yet.
Warden Park Academy	Special Support Centre	In Design	Mar 23	Being delivered in partnership with the Academy Trust as part of a joint CIF bid
West Park Primary School	Special Support Centre	In Design	June 23	On target

Key to the successful delivery of these projects is good planning to ensure that the proposed solution meets the needs of the school and delivers the projects in the most effective way. Recognising the urgency of these projects and the need to accelerate delivery we do as a matter of course consider:

Cabinet Member Responses to Recommendations

- Alternative forms of construction. This includes 'Modern Methods of Construction' which involves the construction off-site of modular building elements. Of, course any solution needs to ensure the final building meets the needs of the students.
- Ways in which we can shorten the procurement programme whilst ensuring that we get value for money.
- Shortening the Governance process whilst complying with the WSCC constitution and the requirements of scrutiny.

In considering each of the above we have to ensure that we meet the needs of the school or college and provide value for money. In addition, there is very rarely a clear cut solution so there is inevitably an exercise in weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. For example, 'Modern Methods of Construction' may be ideal for 'new build' but totally unsuitable for refurbishment. A single tender action will get a project on site earlier, but it has to be weighed up against obtaining value for money, the reaction of other competitors and the costs of teaching pupils out of County or in an unsuitable learning environment.

Other pressures we are seeing coming through at the moment are inflation and the shortage of certain materials in the construction industry. As has been well documented in the national press, we are seeing significant cost increases driven by labour and material shortages. These pressures have a direct impact on costs which then has an impact on the programme, with contractors being reluctant to sign up to challenging delivery dates without sufficient financial reward.

I also note your comment about prioritising the delivery of the SSCs within the Capital Programme. I can reassure you that all of the SSCs in the above programme are being taken forward as quickly as possible and there is no prioritisation of other projects over the SSCs.

I hope the above addresses the points raised in your e-mail. If you have any further queries then please do not hesitate to contact either myself or the Director of Property and Assets, Andrew Edwards, who will be able to assist.

Best wishes,

Cllr Jeremy Hunt

Cabinet Member for Finance