

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board 22/23				
Scrutiny Board Date	Agenda Item Title	Action/Recommendation	Responsible Director /Body	Activity Log as at 12 Sept 22
27 AUG 21	Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport Models	1 That the Director – Law and Governance arrange for the following recommendations to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration	Cabinet	
		(1a) That the Cabinet reviews the administration of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport to ensure consistency of approach and that resourcing is adequate in light of increasing demand on the service.	Cabinet	14/02/22 - As the new procurement process is worked the service will continue to be reviewed to ensure consistency, transparency and robustness of service delivery and that there is a sustainable structure in place to support future demands.
		(1b) That the Cabinet ensures that the Parent Group for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is communicated and consulted with on any changes to the Transport service and, where possible, the views of affected children and young people are also sought.	Cabinet	14/02/2022 - Regular meetings with Parent Carers Voices United (SEND Parent Carer Forum) are in place and it has been agreed that a member of the Travel Assistance Service office will attend the forum.
		(c) That the Cabinet ensures that Education Health Care Plan assessments are carried out without delay to ensure early identification of recommended provision, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport requirements.	Cabinet	14/02/2022 - Not all children who have an EHCP are eligible for transport as detailed in the Home to School and Adult Learner Policy. In terms of EHC assessments once the LA has received a report from the Community Assessment Meeting (CAM) that a statutory assessment may be needed it will take that report to the next Assessment and Moderation Panel (AMP). At the AMP a decision will be made as to whether to accept the recommendation of the CAM to proceed with a statutory assessment. The process is the same if the LA has received a request directly from a parent or young person. Parents/Carers will be informed of the LA's decision within 6 weeks of receipt of the CAM report or the parent/young person request. If the

				decision at AMP is to proceed with a statutory assessment then the LA will begin the process of gathering information and advice which will inform its decision as to whether to issue an Education, Health and Care Plan. The assessment process will take about 10 weeks. Local Authorities then have a statutory duty to finalise and issue the EHCP within 20 weeks of the start of the process.
		(d) That the Cabinet re-evaluates child to adult ratios for minibuses to ensure that they are appropriate and reflect assessed risks and needs on a case by case basis.	Cabinet	14/02/2022 - This will form be reviewed as part of the new procurement exercise to ensure that the needs of the child are meet
		(e) That the Cabinet continues, and seeks to increase, the Independent Travel Training Programme.	Cabinet	14/02/2022 - Both SEN and the Travel Assistance Service will continue to promote the Travel Training Programme to parents/cares and schools to encourage take up and help provide life skills
		(f) That the Cabinet refreshes awareness campaigns relating to Personal Budgets and the Independent Travel Training Programme to ensure all families are aware of the options available.	Cabinet	14/02/2022 - SEN will continue to promote both Personal Budgets and the Independent Travel Training Programme as part of the initial EHCP assessments and at the annual review.
		(g) That the Cabinet reviews Early Years provision in each town, which may help reduce transport costs.	Cabinet	14/02/2022 - The Early Years Transformation Academy (EYTA) is an intensive year long Leadership and Management programme set up by the Early InterventionFoundation (EIF) funded through the DfE to provide strategic vision in Systems Change Management using the theory of change model. The team was made up of a Public Health commissioner, Health Commissioner, Early Years lead for Public health, Health Visiting Lead, Children Centre Commissioner, Quality Early Years Manager, Inclusion Support Early Years Manager and Midwifery Lead. The team mapped the services and provision across the pre-conception to end of reception years, undertook 150 parent interviews with Sandwell families to understand what it is like being a family with young children living in Sandwell and completed the data analysis Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 0-5 Years. The key findings/actions taken from this piece of work were: 1. Speech, language and communication was a key feature of the needs of young children and a barrier to learning and good outcomes in adulthood.

				<p>2. There was a gap for children after the age of 12 months up to 2.5 years from universal services such as Health Visitors.</p> <p>3. A Speech, Language and Communication Pathway was developed using existing pathways.</p> <p>4. Additional funding was secured from Health for a consultant model for SALT - dedicated Speech and Language Therapist.</p> <p>5. Wellcomm screening is available from 18months through Children Centres and day-care settings.</p> <p>6. Re-visit developmental check on or before 18mths by a Health Visitor Team showing emerging delay in development.</p> <p>In addition, there is involvement with the Black Country Outcomes project which is focussing on SLCN for all children. All of the above work will support future mapping of need across the borough and inform place planning.</p>
		(h) That the Cabinet reviews time lengths of journeys to ensure that children are not needing to travel for more than 50 minutes in normal circumstances.	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - All contracts will continue to be regularly monitored to ensure that no journey time exceeds 50 mins.</p> <p>All tenders will be evaluated to ensure that journey times are kept to a minimum prior to awarding new contracts.</p>
		(i) That the Cabinet considers how place provision strategically located throughout the borough can be used to minimise journey times.	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - Place provision is reviewed and where ever possible provision is strategically located in the borough. Projections for mainstream schools are produced by our Data Intelligence team to support the sufficiency analysis for new places. We predict that the number of children and young people with EHC plans within Sandwell schools will increase by an average of 5.3% each year over the next 5 years and the general population number of pupils will increase by 1.4%. This prediction estimates that there could be an additional 500 – 630 statutory school aged pupils with an EHC Plans within 5 years. This as well as other data is considered when planning provision.</p>
		(j) That the Cabinet considers the following in relation to the contracting of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport for February 2022:- (i) providers should ensure drivers and Passenger Assistants are trained, and accredited where appropriate, in First Aid,	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - All new contracts (New framework) from September with require all drivers and all passengers assistants to have a first aid accreditation.</p> <p>Where a child requires specialist support during the journey we will continue to enable their carer and/or nurse to travel with them on their own (single occupancy vehicle)</p> <p>The new framework will build in greater financial and service resilience</p>

		<p>non-verbal communication, use of safety harnesses and manual handling. In addition there should be Advanced Passenger Assistants who are specifically trained to provide emergency medication on transport, including but not limited to administering pre-loaded EpiPens or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices;</p> <p>(ii) a market position statement be prepared, encouraging competition from a wide range of suppliers;</p> <p>(iii) small and medium enterprises should be afforded opportunities to tender for the contracts;</p> <p>(iv) mainly whole school provision should be the preferred approach;</p> <p>(v) some harmonisation of provision should be considered to balance effective management of contracts whilst retaining a diversified group of providers;</p> <p>(vi) the model for provision should avoid the increased risk associated with awarding contracts to a small number of providers.</p>		<p>for the council by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the total number of Lots awarded • limiting the total amount of work a single operator can be awarded • reserving the right not to accept the lowest tenderer for a respective Lot to ensure the most economic advantageous award of contract is made • adopting an appropriate evaluation matrix to manage the equitable award of contracts to individual operators • selecting a wide range of operators to minimise the risk of service disruption through the failure of a single operator • securing satisfactory evidence of the ongoing financial resilience of the operators admitted to the Framework • ensuring adequate contingency plans are in place to ensure continuity of service • this will help to provide opportunities for existing and new SME operators
		<p>(k) That the Cabinet undertakes a trial scheme for providing Passenger Assistants in-house, or in partnership with schools, as part of the contracting of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport and that a full analysis is carried out on the trial scheme to determine its effectiveness.</p>	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - A pilot scheme to be developed to consider;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • role and responsibilities of the passenger assistant • uptake of the role • the cost to the Council • Impact on children and their families • Impact for operators • how other Council who directly employ passenger assistants operate
		<p>(l) That the Cabinet investigates the feasibility of taking Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport provision in-house, this should include risks, costs, benefits, potential timescales and suitable performance</p>	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - This will be considered as part of a wider review of transport services in the Council and will consider;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost • Capacity • Quality of provision

		<p>indicators, and it should include the following options:</p> <p>(i) full Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport service in-house;</p> <p>(ii) combined provision with existing Adult Social Care Transport;</p> <p>(iii) only Passenger Assistants service provided in-house.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility of service to meet demand • Continued service improvement • Alternative delivery models • Ability to maintain a sustainable service • Mitigation of risk
		<p>(m) That the Cabinet ensures that, however the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport service is provided in future, Passenger Assistants:-</p> <p>(i) must be trained, and accredited where appropriate, in First Aid, communication with non-verbal children; and</p> <p>(ii) during their induction and onboarding a clear and strong emphasis should be placed on relationship building between the Passenger Assistant, the family, the school and the transport provider;</p> <p>(iii) also include Advanced Passenger Assistants who are specifically trained to provide emergency medication on transport, including but not limited to administering pre-loaded EpiPens or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices;</p>	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - Covered in previous responses. The Travel Assistance Service will continue to promote and encourage the building of relationships between the child, their family, driver and passenger assistant to foster trust and ensure the journey is always a good experience .</p>
		<p>(n) That the Cabinet investigates with partners how children with Autism Spectrum Disorders can receive earlier diagnoses which can help improve outcomes, including around transport needs, for that group.</p>	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - Sandwell has a multi-agency assessment pathway for Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Multi Agency Assessment (MAA) pathway investigates whether a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder would be appropriate for a child or young person. The MAA is completed by three different agencies which will include a Consultant Paediatrician or Consultant Psychiatrist, a Speech and Language Therapist and a Specialist Advisory Teacher, it can also include an Occupational Therapist.</p> <p>Sandwell' autism diagnostic pathway is a partnership between</p>

				<p>Children’s Therapies, Inclusion Support’s Complex Communication and Autism Team and Early Years Team, The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Child Health – Paediatrics. Assessments are carried out with regard to the diagnostic criteria set out in the ICD 10/11. Best Practice guidelines are set out in the NICE Guidance- Autism spectrum disorder in under 19s: recognition, referral and diagnosis (CG128).</p> <p>The assessment period is around 30 weeks; Sandwell does not have a ‘waiting list’, children and young people are under assessment from the point that the referral is processed following the completion of the required NHS checks. In the academic year 2020-21, over 240 diagnostic assessments were completed. In the period July 2018- July 2021 there has been a 64% overall increase in Sandwell of the number of autistic children and young people. Our mainstream primary schools have seen a 112% increase.</p> <p>The MAA Pathway is held under review by the ASD Steering Group who monitor number of referrals and completion times. The Steering Group works to improve access to the pathway with information for parents and professionals. Information on the Local Offer is currently being revised and amended by the Steering Group. It is important to note that multi- agency partners do not have additional resources to provide this pathway.</p> <p>The MAA pathway is separate to the identification of transport needs. Transport needs will be considered in line with the Sandwell Home to School and Adult Learner Transport Policy.</p>
		(o) That the Cabinet ensures that research relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is considered whenever it is available to identify potential areas of improvement in Sandwell’s service provision.	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - The SEND strategy 2021-2024 details the Sandwell vision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities The priority area’ for development are: 1. Quality Assurance of Statutory responsibilities: 2. Workforce Development 3. Improving Provision 4. Improving Progress and Attainment The SEND Strategic Board is responsible for the governance and commissioning of services to support children and young people with SEND across the Sandwell Local Area and will be key to the delivery of this strategy. As a multi-agency group the latest evidence and research</p>

				is constantly reviewed to inform and ensure improvements are continual.
		(2) That the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board is kept informed about the process for commissioning Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport in Sandwell.	Cabinet	14/02/2022 - the Board would continue to receive updates as required.
		(3) That Post-18 Provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities be included in the work programme for the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board.	Scrutiny Board	14/02/2022 - Update presented to the Scrutiny Board
29 NOV 22	Elective Home Education Working Group	(a) The EHE resource pack be reviewed and edited to make it more accessible to parents	Cabinet	12/01/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.
		(b) The EHE website be refreshed to provide information, guides and links to other information and links to EHE forums for advice and support	Cabinet	12/01/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.
		(c) To identify resource and support within the council to facilitate the refresh	Cabinet	12/01/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.
		(d) That additional spaces and facilities be identified for EHE groups to meet and carry out activities, and that competitive rates for use of those facilities be negotiated for EHE group use	Cabinet	12/01/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.
		(e) That the Council develop a mechanism for resources to be shared for EHE, such as a hub for books or other educational material to be kept;	Cabinet	12/01/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.
		(f) That youth social networks, such as 'Just Youth', be promoted on the EHE website for users to find out what's on in Sandwell for young people and to encourage engagement;	Cabinet	12/01/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.

		(g) To raise awareness of the SEN and EHCP support available and access for children.	Cabinet	12/01/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.
		(h) That the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life and the DCS, on behalf of the Council, be requested to write to the Secretary of State for Education, and to the Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry of Home Education, to register this council's findings from the Elective Home Education review which highlights the need for regulation and resources for Elective Home Education; and to endorse a letter from the Association of EHE Professionals which asks whether consideration is being given to strengthening the legislation to provide further safeguards for children who are EHE.	Cabinet	12/01/21 - Agreed that the response to the findings would be submitted to the Scrutiny Board within two months.
	Youth Facilities Review	<p>A Partnership Framework (to include a Communications Plan and Multi-agency approach) is developed with young people, for young people and is specifically targeted to promote current activities and future opportunities using the experts within the council to provide a joined-up plan that compliments services across the local authority.</p> <p>This should consider how we currently communicate, what we currently communicate and the most effective platforms to use across a range of media.</p> <p>A Youth Symposium should be held in early 2021 for all partners in the borough to help build a clear picture of what is available, build upon key themes arising from the Scrutiny Review, the multi-agency approach and</p>	Youth Officers	<p>14/02/2022 - Working with the Shape programme and Public Health, investment was secured in 2020 for an apprentice role to lead the work on communications and marketing both for the Shape Programme and for Just Youth. This has led to a range of improvements to the website and an increased usage of social media platforms resulting in increased traffic on the website and engagement with social media channels.</p> <p>The Black Country & West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group has provided funding to support ongoing development of the website with internal and external partners and promotion of this in community venues, as part of their ongoing commitment to the delivery of the Children & Young People's Engagement Strategy and the Shape Programme.</p> <p>The Children & Young People's Engagement Strategy has been developed with young people and stakeholders and was launched in April 2021. This brought together young people, stakeholders and enabled some key partners to showcase their youth offer. However, to do this justice and deliver a meaningful Youth Symposium a face to</p>

		<p>develop closer partnership working for a joined-up offer for Sandwell. The youth symposium should draw together a joined-up approval to youth work and young people in Sandwell.</p>		<p>face event is required to explore what a co-ordinated and renewed youth offer would look like. Alongside the Strategy, a communications plan has been developed to ensure key messages targeted at young people are shared through existing social media channels. To develop this further young people have been trained as Digital Leaders and will be looking to lead the development of content on both the website and social media, including looking at TikTok.</p>
		<p>Young people should be afforded safe, flexible, space of their own, with 'Wi-fi & Dry' as the basic offer in Sandwell. The council should take a strategic approach and consider modelling 'space options' across the Borough's 6 towns, these could test:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Use of libraries within extended opening times – rethinking their use in the community ii. Mobile provision (through a bus or support vehicle). iii. Pop up shops and underused town centre units. iv. Leisure & Activity Centres. v. Other council properties and schools. vi. New build, where no existing options are deemed suitable. 	<p>Youth Officers</p>	<p>14/02/2022 - In terms of mobile youth provision, the Service has 2 youth buses (double decker and single decker). This provision has not been operational during Covid due to social distancing restrictions but has been much sought after by young people. The Council is currently pursuing funding to purchase a new electric double decker youth bus which will require an investment in infrastructure.</p> <p>The Town's Fund programme has prioritised a number of projects that will provide young people with places to go including a new skate park and community hub in Britannia Park. In Smethwick additional multi use classrooms are to be added at the Ron Davis Centre and improvements made to outdoor sports facilities in Lewisham Park. Additionally, plans for West Bromwich include improved facilities at West Bromwich Town Hall and Library including the development of a Cultural Quarter.</p> <p>After a successful pilot of sports based youth activity at Tipton Sports Academy, The Service is exploring the use of other Leisure Centre Facilities in Oldbury and West Bromwich, however these come with a cost that the Service is currently not budgeted for.</p> <p>Not with-standing the restrictions imposed by Covid 19, the Service has been able to explore some alternative models of delivery where we have gaps in provision across the 6 towns. In addition to provision currently open in Tipton, West Bromwich and Smethwick (see Appendix 3 for current youth provision list), we are currently exploring options for open access youth provision within libraries particularly in West Bromwich, Oldbury and Rowley Regis. We have re-located our SEND youth club from the Meadows School to Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery, our detached youth work team in Lightwood Park is</p>

				<p>exploring the use of Lightswood House to facilitate a young Friends of the Park group, and we are exploring other museum facilities which may be suitable for young people's provision. In Wednesbury we are also exploring the option of developing open access provision with the voluntary sector at Wednesbury 2000.</p> <p>During the Covid19 period, the value and importance of detached Youth Work has been even more pronounced and the relationship between this work, and access to 'Wifi and Dry' spaces even more important. Whilst the Service is exploring many options for creating accessible youth spaces, the challenges still remain around multi use shared spaces and young people having some ownership and ability to make the space their own.</p>
		<p>The council explores the option of providing free or concessionary public transport for young people to enable better access to local youth activities, opening up Sandwell and all it offers. Targeted provision should be considered in relation to vulnerable young people and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).</p>	Youth Officers	<p>14/02/2022 - Although there are some concessionary travel discount schemes for young people up to age 18 to support them with subsidised travel to education or work, none of these extend to leisure time use. This is a wider issue that needs to be championed with the West Midlands Combined Authority.</p> <p>However, the development of the Metro site in Tipton, as part of the Strategic Transport Plan, is immediately adjacent to Coneygre Youth Centre. This will provide an opportunity for the council to develop the Coneygre Youth Centre as a 'hub' because young people will be able to get to it more easily, although there is still a cost attached. It may be possible to consider a scheme that would compensate the cost of travel to Coneygre and Malthouse.</p> <p>Additionally, the Strategic Transport Plan prioritizes cycle routes, which will come through Sandwell and funding is identified from the Town's Fund to further develop infrastructure across West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis to support cycling.</p>
		<p>The council should take a more strategic approach to funding and explore existing funding pots through a better use of regional partnerships and directories. Better alignment could be made to complimentary activity within the voluntary sector (such as SVCO's community grants) and to the</p>	Youth Officers	<p>14/02/2022 - The Service has been successful in getting funding for additional targeted work in West Bromwich through the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) and the Safer Streets Fund (SSF). VRU funding is targeted at addressing under 25's youth violence through detached youth work, mentoring and diversionary activity. The SSF is part of a more collaborative bid across the Council and with partners addressing issues of harassment and violence against women and girls.</p>

		corporate social responsibility objectives of local businesses		<p>Additionally, the Government's Holiday Activity & Food programme has enabled holiday activity programmes for young people to be delivered during key school holiday periods.</p> <p>As part of the Government's Spending Review, a commitment has been made to the Youth Investment Fund over the next 3 years. This will provide capital and some revenue funding for youth provision in left behind areas, these are yet to be announced.</p> <p>The Children and Young People's Strategic Commissioning Partnership has facilitated a collaborative approach to funding bids, ensuring that partners work together when drafting and submitting bids for funding, a good example of this is the recent bid for Family Hubs funding that bought together the Council, CCG and Sandwell Children's Trust.</p>
		The Council should develop a renewed 'Youth Offer' which clearly identifies the very positive activities that are currently on offer and addresses those gaps which would enable a more bespoke approach. The National Youth Agency's Standard Quality Mark Framework should be used to measure the capacity, quality and sufficiency of youth facilities in Sandwell.	Youth Officers	<p>14/02/2022 - During the Covid19 lockdown, the youth offer has been via detached youth work and online support, including a weekly agony aunt session on facebook. As Covid restrictions have eased some face to face open access youth provision has re-opened. In addition, we have continued to provide support to vulnerable young people through our Enhanced Youth Support team.</p> <p>Due to Covid19 it has not been possible to progress the NYASQMF. However, whilst plans are in place to progress this between April 2022-March 2023, we have progressed work on a theory of change model for the Service. This model sets out the areas of focus for the Youth Service and what support young people can expect.</p> <p>During Covid we have also invested in training and development for youth workers with 14 achieving a level 2 and 8 achieving a level 3 Award in Youth Work Practise.</p>
		A renewed youth offer would aim to close the gaps in provision and ensure sufficiency of youth facilities, but in order to do this would require an increase in capacity and therefore the resources required to deliver the provision would need to be reviewed.	Youth Officers	<p>14/02/2022 - The Council's Corporate Plan and the budget setting process will consider this recommendation alongside other priorities for the council's budget, aligned to the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>In the absence of any national statutory benchmark or guidance on what a sufficient youth service would offer, the National Youth Agency suggest each Local Authority (including any voluntary and Community sector provision) would provide at least two, full-time equivalent professionals who are JNC qualified youth workers be located in a secondary school catchment area, along with an equivalent team of at</p>

				<p>least four youth support workers, and trained volunteers, to ensure minimum access to quality youth services. Sandwell Youth Service currently employs 27 number of FTE and 7 of these are JNC qualified. It is difficult to assess what is currently available in the voluntary and community sector as this data is not captured.</p>
		<p>Following the success of the Question Time session held during the review, it is recommended that quarterly Question Time sessions be scheduled into the Scrutiny Work Programme, with Shape forum the Cabinet Member / Champion for Children and Young People.</p>	<p>Youth Officers</p>	<p>It had been hoped that this would be possible from autumn 2020, however, the ongoing Covid19 restrictions mean that a physical meeting is not possible at the current time. Contact with young people throughout this period has demonstrated that very few have access to the Teams environment and many are uncomfortable meeting in this way. With face to face meetings only resuming in September 2021, there is much work to be done in re-establishing the forum and getting everyone at a level of confidence to re-engage. It is proposed that the Question Time events are re-established to start in the 2022 summer term and then take place on a quarterly basis. Also, Scrutiny alongside the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Education and the Cabinet Advisor for Young People & Skills need to consider the outcomes they want and the scope of the Question Time sessions.</p>