

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
10 Oct 22	Sandwell Children's Trust – Site Visit			
	Site visit to the Sandwell Children's Trust	For the Scrutiny Board to visit the Sandwell Children's Trust	Dem Services / SCT	Dates and times being confirmed.
Update: 14 Nov 22	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. 14/11/22 - Capacity and capability of the team to remain under review as robust contract monitoring is introduced.
		(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. 14/11/22 - Parent/Carer Newsletter sent to all families every half term Team to investigate a secure parent portal to make it easier for parents/carers to update their details.
		(c) That the Cabinet ensures that Education Health Care Plan assessments are carried out without delay to ensure early identification of	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

		recommended provision, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport requirements.		<p>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.</p> <p>14/11/22 – As noted previously</p>
		(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	<p>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</p> <p>14/11/22 - The ratio of 1 passenger assistant to each vehicle is in place and works well. Individual (1:1) passengers assistants are provided to support indivual children, where required, e.g. medical needs</p>
		(e) That the Cabinet continues, and seeks to increase, the Independent Travel Training Programme.	Cabinet	<p>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</p> <p>14/11/22 - Ongoing</p>
		(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	<p>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.</p> <p>14/11/22 – As noted previously</p>

		(g) That the Cabinet reviews Early Years provision in each town, which may help reduce transport costs.	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - The Early Years Transformation Academy (EYTA) is an intensive year long Leadership and Management programme set up by the Early Intervention Foundation (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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. 3. A Speech, Language and Communication Pathway was developed using existing pathways. 4. Additional funding was secured from Health for a consultant model for SALT - dedicated Speech and Language Therapist. 5. Wellcomm screening is available from 18months through Children Centres and day-care settings. 6. Re-visit developmental check on or before 18mths by a Health Visitor Team showing emerging delay in development. <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> <p>14/11/22 – as noted above, with a focus on specialist place planning and increasing capacity across the borough.</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. All tenders will be evaluated to ensure that journey times are kept to a minimum prior to awarding new contracts.</p> <p>14/11/22 - All journeys times for children and young people are restricted to 50 mins or less unless the journeys are out of borough and it's not possible. Travel Assistance Service are also exploring the use of an app to provide real time updates to parents/carers e.g. a text is sent if the vehicle is running late due to unexpected traffic.</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> <p>14/11/22 – as noted previously</p>
		<p>(j) That the Cabinet considers the following in relation to the contracting of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Transport for February 2022:-</p> <p>(i) providers should ensure drivers and Passenger Assistants are trained, and accredited where appropriate, in First Aid, non-verbal communication, use of safety harnesses and manual handling. In addition</p>	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 for the council by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing the total number of Lots awarded

		<p>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>14/11/22 - A first aid accreditation is now part of the required training that all drivers and PA's have to undertake prior to working in Sandwell</p> <p>Key Features of Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 contracts over 3 lots • Broader structure of lots to support/ encourage SME's • Operators were originally limited to the award of 1 contract per lot • Robust evaluation thresholds for compliance, finance & quality reviewed and improved. • Further opportunities for new contracts during life of framework • Enhanced pricing structure for tender submissions • Service Specification for Operators: reviewed & updated • Improved compliance: robust and regular contract monitoring to be done that looks at operationally & contractually matters
--	--	---	---

		(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.	Cabinet	<p>14/02/2022 - A pilot scheme to be developed to consider; • 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> <p>14/11/22 - This will be considered as part of the new procurement exercise which will start in Spring 2023 for new contracts from September 2024.</p>
		<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 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>	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 • Flexibility of service to meet demand • Continued service improvement • Alternative delivery models • Ability to maintain a sustainable service • Mitigation of risk <p>14/11/22 - This will be explored as part of the new procurement exercise</p>
		<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</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>14/11/22 - The Travel Assistance Service are exploring the option to introduce a secure parent portal that will allow details to be updated so any required changes can be action quickly.</p>

		transport provider; (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;		
		(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.	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 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</p>

				<p>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> <p>14/11/22- as noted previously</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 is constantly reviewed to inform and ensure improvements are continual.</p> <p>14/11/22 – as noted above</p>
		(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