

To: **Schools Forum**  
**9<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

---

## **Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) and Banding Tool Development Update**

### **Executive Director: People**

#### **1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Schools Forum, relating to the development and work associated with primary and secondary SRPs within Bracknell Forest and the development and implementation of a Banding Tool.

#### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 For member to be sighted on activity:
- 1) The drive to bring online of the 40 ASC SRP places at Kings Academy Binfield across primary and secondary education stages
  - 2) Development of Capital Board to oversee the utilisation of the borough's SEND capital.
  - 3) Plan to undertake procurement to establish an additional 30 secondary ASC SRP places.
  - 4) Ongoing support of Harmans Water SEMH SRP
  - 5) Ongoing development of Owlsmoor Cognition and Learning SRP with the creation of an additional 8 places.
  - 6) To note the work related to the implementation of a new banding tool for the allocation of top up funding and the need to ensure this does not create additional pressure on the high needs block budget, supported through modelling.

#### **3 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 None

#### **4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 None

#### **5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1. Following a review of the SRP offer in Bracknell Forest a report was submitted to school's forum for consideration on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October.
- 5.2. This report set out the future development of SRP's with a focus on generating additional places for children with Autistic spectrum condition (ASC) within the secondary sector and a review of the current SRP at Meadowvale Primary that provides provision for children with Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

### **Secondary SRP Development**

- 5.3. The work to date has focused on two specific strands of activity: development of an additional 30 SRP places for children within the secondary phase of education and the bringing online of 40 SRP places already developed and illustrated with a funding agreement between King Academy Binfield and the Department for Education.
- 5.4. As part of the development of the new school at Binfield, now Kings Academy, the development of a 40 place SRP provision was a key element of the new school build. The school has capacity to provide 14 places in primary and 26 places in secondary.
- 5.5. To date only 1 place has been secured in the SRP over the 5 years that the school has been open. That child started in the primary provision in September 2022.
- 5.6. Officers are focusing on bringing available places for both primary and secondary for September 2023 for this year's phase transfer. 10 young people have been identified as suitable for accessing secondary places for September 2023, bringing these places online are paramount for the borough.
- 5.7. To secure these places, we have a meeting diarised with the MAT chief executive and the schools head in early March 2023 to develop a way forward.

### **New Secondary ASC SRP Provision.**

- 5.8. Following the SRP review undertaken in mid-2022 it was recommended that 30 new SRP places should be developed in the secondary sector.
- 5.9. All Bracknell Secondary schools were contacted in November 2022 to secure initial expressions of interest.
- 5.10. Of the 7 secondary schools in Bracknell Forest, 3 responded that they would be interested in undertaking further discussions about the potential of hosting a secondary SRP for children with ASC.
- 5.11. Visits have now been undertaken with all 3 schools to understand the feasibility of hosting an SRP and to understand the potential level of capital investment required.
- 5.12. Two of the schools will require a substantial new build and therefore capital, to be able to provide an SRP offer. The third school will still require a capital spend to reconfigure an existing space to deliver the required accommodation.
- 5.13. To formalise the procurement of provision, initial meetings have taken place with the corporate partners to understand the governance structure. Initial discussion has implied that a full open tendering process will be required given the size of the award, taking into account capital and revenue expenditure. We continue to work closely with corporate colleagues to undertake a full and transparent procurement process. We are planning that a proportion of the recommended 30 places will be available from September 2024.

### **Further Secondary Development**

- 5.14. We have identified that the development of a secondary cognition and learning SRP will support effective transition specifically from Owlsmoor primary SRP. This is more imperative given the growth proposed of the current SRP/unit at Owlsmoor detailed below.

- 5.15. This proposed development will require a significant level of capital and revenue funding over the contract's life.
- 5.16. Through discussion with procurement corporate colleagues this will require a full tendering process to ensure legal compliance.
- 5.17. This development has been detailed to the capital strategy group to ensure strategic oversight and support.

#### **Primary SRP update**

- 5.18. Following the review of current primary SRP provision, the decision was taken to review the current SLCN SRP hosted at Meadowvale Primary School.
- 5.19. Meetings have taken place with the school head, school SENCO, 2 engagement events have been undertaken with parents and carers and meetings with health and commissioning representatives.
- 5.20. The review has yet to conclude its findings, as more work is being undertaken to cross reference children with identified SLCN against the SLCN SRP's entry criteria to understand if the entry criteria is the ultimate obstacle in children accessing the provision.
- 5.21. A meeting has diarised with the head teacher on SENCO for the 27<sup>th</sup> of February to finalise next steps.
- 5.22. In November 2022 officers were contacted by the head at Harmans Water Primary School, this school currently host the borough's one Social Emotional and Mental health (SEMH) SRP.
- 5.23. The head reported that the school were in crisis due to the level of challenge that staff were having to manage, this had resulted in staff choosing to leave the school creating significant capacity challenges.
- 5.24. Urgent meetings were scheduled and a support package for the school has been developed and implemented. A critical factor identified was the need to secure special school placements for 2 children that had been placed in the SRP by the borough. Further ongoing touch down meetings are planned. Officers from school standards, behaviour support and send services continue to support the school to develop skill and confidence.
- 5.25. Currently the send service is consulting with other schools to secure provision for the two children requiring more specialist provision. However, lack of appropriate provision in Bracknell Forest, neighbouring authorities and the independent sector is hampering progress. This work continues at pace.
- 5.26. Discussion is underway with the head of Owlsmoor Primary to explore the potential of further expansion of the school's specialist unit, that currently caters for 8 children with complex cognition and learning needs.
- 5.27. The school have proposed that they could provide an additional 8 places in their unit doubling the number of children that they cater for.
- 5.28. This will provide two distinct streams, one stream will be for children that can access some aspects of the mainstream curriculum, the second stream will provide an

appropriate bespoke education offer for more complex children that will struggle to access a mainstream curriculum.

- 5.29. Finally, in order to ensure strategic oversight of SEND provision development within Bracknell Forest, it has been agreed that a Capital board will be set up.
- 5.30. This board will have oversight of SEND Capital Funding. It will provide input, transparency, and governance on the use of SEND Capital Funding.

### **Banding tool update**

- 5.31. As previously detailed an initial event was held at Jennets Park Primary school in late 2022.
- 5.32. Following this event, schools returned the band values to the LA following needs being assessed through the agreed banding tool.
- 5.33. We have been able to collect data from 13 settings. Of the 13 settings only 7 included the current funding allocation on their spreadsheet returns.
- 5.34. Securing the current funding allocation for the remaining 6 schools has paused due to staff sickness and therefore it has not been possible to undertake any data scrutiny until recent days and this work has now begun in earnest.
- 5.35. Of some concern was the level of funding that a number of schools identified for existing children, with one school identifying 4 children requiring £40,000 of top up.
- 5.36. We are currently in the process of moderating these high-level costs to understand if this is related to individual children's needs or an administrative situation.
- 5.37. The table 1 illustrates the data secured to date from the banding workshop. The schools are a mix of Primary settings, secondary settings and children accessing SRP's.
- 5.38. Further work is ongoing to understand what the implication will be of introducing the new banding tool on the high needs block and therefore the funding levels allocated to schools through the tool.
- 5.39. In order to get a better understanding of the impact, it is planned that we will undertake a pilot project where draft plans will be costed through the new tool. We will hold anonymised details of each child that has been costed through the tool centrally. This will be monitored weekly to secure an understanding of the implications. Schools will have an opportunity to challenge the allocation at this stage through the development of a provision map.
- 5.40. This pilot project will be kept under review and secure feedback of the implementation across the system.

Table 1: Summary initial findings from banding exercise

	Old funding model	Post new banding tool	Difference	Number of children	Old cost per pupil	New cost per pupil
school1	£3,145,988	£3,270,000	£124,012	159	£19,786	£20,566
school 2	£120,092	£343,000	£222,908	19	£6,321	£18,053
school 3	£52,680	£95,000	£42,320	5	£10,536	£19,000
school 4	£26,000	£33,500	£7,500	3	£8,667	£11,167
School 5	£35,926	£43,000	£7,074	7	£5,132	£6,143
School 6	£36,387	£32,000	-£4,387	5	£7,277	£6,400
School 7	£155,380	£67,500	-£87,880	10	£15,538	£6,750

### Financial considerations

- 5.41. In respect of the SRP programme, sufficient DfE grant funding is available to finance the capital costs of current proposals. In respect of revenue funding requirements, the development of SRP places is a key element of the medium-term financial plan and is expected to deliver significant financial and other benefits. Details of the current forecasts are included on the separate agenda item relating to the 2023-24 High Needs Block Budget Proposals. These will be subject to regular update and change as the programme progresses and developments finalised. In respect of the Banding Tool, the pilot scheme will be used as a basis to establish potential costs and benefits of any proposed changes which will then be subject to review by the schools Forum and agreement of the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

None

7 Legal Advice

None

8 Financial Advice

This is set out in the supporting information.

9 Other Consultation Responses

None

10 Equalities Impact Assessment

11 Background Papers

Contact for further information

Nathan Jones, Interim SEND Improvement Project Manager - 01344 352 947

[nathan.jones@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:nathan.jones@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)