

Lancashire County Council

Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 13th December, 2023 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Agenda

Part I (Open to Press and Public)

No. Item

1. Apologies

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are asked to consider any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests they may have to disclose to the meeting in relation to matters under consideration on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1 November 2023 (Pages 1 - 6)

To be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Alternative Provision Strategy (Pages 7 - 20)

5. SEND Sufficiency Plan (Pages 21 - 24)

6. Work Programme 2023/24 (Pages 25 - 34)

7. Urgent Business

An item of urgent business may only be considered under this heading where, by reason of special circumstances to be recorded in the minutes, the chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency. Wherever possible, the chief executive should be given advance warning of any member's intention to raise a matter under this heading.



8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee will be held on Wednesday 31 January 2024 at 10.30 am in Committee Room C – The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston.

County Hall
Preston

H MacAndrew
Director of Law and Governance



Lancashire County Council

Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 1st November, 2023 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Sue Hind (Chair)

County Councillors

M Clifford	J Potter
S Barnes	R Woollam
A Cheetham	N Khan
L Cox	P Britcliffe
A Hindle	S Clarke
T Hurn	

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Stewart Jones.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 20 September 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20 September 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Young People in Education, Employment or Training and Young People not in Education, Employment or Training

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Jayne Rear, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Julie Bell, Interim Director of Education, Skills and Culture, Aby Hardy, Head of Education Improvement and Sarah Hirst, 16-19 Education and Skills Lead to the meeting.

The committee considered a report that provided an update to the report presented at the April 2023 meeting on the work the council was doing to support young people into education, employment, or training (EET) after they had completed their compulsory school education.

A presentation was also provided to the committee, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Comments and queries raised from the committee were as follows:

- Ensuring a young person in employment would continue to receive future training to advance their skills and enhance their prospects for the future, was important to the committee, and it was noted that the council was continuing to work with employers to upskill their workforce and were continuing to provide training for young people to ensure they were given the necessary skills and training for future career aspects.
- Young people in Lancashire who were residing in the county and in care or leaving care between the ages of 12 and 25 received support from the Employment and Support Team within the Virtual School. It was also noted that the support also extended to those who had an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) and a SEND employment officer had been employed by the council specifically to look at that cohort. Additionally, to enable young people, including those with SEND, to advance in further education, the council had worked closely with colleges to make sure that the necessary qualifications and courses were available.
- It was expected that Lancashire County Council would get funding for post-16 education as part of the Devolution Deal, and it was highlighted that the districts must be involved in any youth-related initiatives in their local communities.
- The purpose of the recently established Youth Futures Team was to offer young people who were not in employment, education or training, impartial support and guidance. The team was currently running as a pilot programme and would be reviewed after 18 months to determine whether it had the desired effect and whether the team could then be operated throughout the county.
- The Youth Futures Team priority was to engage with young people who were not in education, employment or training and would originally be focused on the three priority districts of Preston, Burnley and Lancaster due to the levels of new to the country and new to the area living in those districts. However, all districts would continue to be looked at.
- Talks with colleges had already started in response to the government's announcement that A-levels and T-levels would be abolished. However, because the details of the plan were still quite vague, it was challenging for the council and colleges to plan ahead and have a clear idea of how the change may look in the future.
- The county council had a statutory duty to monitor all children who were not in education, employment or training and living in Lancashire, regardless of



their place of origin, even if they were placed there by another local authority or were under the supervision of another local authority.

- The Youth Offending Team were responsible in providing support for employment, education, and training to any young person who was on remand following a criminal offence. They would also make sure that the young person would either be supported into returning to school, if they were still of school age, or if they were 16 or 17, they would support them into finding employment or further education or training.
- It was noted that the new Advanced British Standard required young people to continue to take Maths and English up to the age of 18, and the committee asked if this would have any impact on the figures for young people not in employment, education or training. However, it was clarified that there was already a requirement for young people who failed English and Maths to retake them up until they were 18, so the introduction of the new Advanced British Standard wouldn't necessarily have any impact on the figures of young people not in education, employment or training.
- The committee asked why the figures in Tables 7, 8, and 9 of the report showed that fewer young people were finding work in the public sector, it was noted that this was likely due to the young people's preference rather than the fact that there were fewer opportunities to work in the public sector. It would, however, be looked into and reported back to the committee.
- Having the most recent contact information for those young people who were in the 'Not Know' figures as stated in the report, was one of the county council's biggest. However, the Youth's Future Team continues to search for new ways to get in touch with those young people in order to help reduce the number of 'Not Known' young people and make sure the county council had the most recent data on those young people.
- The county council did not keep track of refugees' employment, training, or apprenticeship status because it was not incorporated into the regular reporting system. However, this could be considered in the future via data collected by colleges.
- It was suggested that the Youth Futures Team be invited to a future meeting to hear from their experiences, to share the progress of their work, and if they had encountered any barriers.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for answering the committees' questions.



Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- i. The Youth Futures Team be invited to attend a future meeting of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee to talk about their work, the progress they have made and any challenges and barriers they have faced.

5. School Place Planning Annual Update

The Chair welcomed Mel Ormesher, Head of Service Asset Management to the meeting.

The committee considered a report that provided the annual update on school place planning in Lancashire against the School Place Planning Strategy 2022-25, the School Place Delivery Programme 2023-25, and provided an update on academy conversion.

A presentation was also provided to the committee, a copy of which is attached to the minutes.

Comments and queries raised from the committee were as follows:

- The committee expressed concerns about the lack of detail in the report about the new school programme, specifically in the Northwest Preston area, it was noted that three proposals for new schools had been submitted for that area. Two primary schools and a secondary school were proposed for the former Whittingham Hospital and Cottam Hall sites, respectively, and the Tulketh High School site. It was requested a report be presented to a future meeting of the committee to consider the new schools programme in Northwest Preston, taking into consideration the outcome of the consultation, feedback from existing schools and what that meant in terms of the next stage.
- The term "internal remodelling", as shown in the delivery plans in Appendix 'C' of the report was clarified for the committee and it was noted that it was about reconfiguring the internal structure of the school. However, it was highlighted that the Department for Education (DfE) had clear guidance on the use of education land and what the council could and couldn't do on the land. A copy of this guidance could be circulated to the committee.
- Before a decision was made to dispose of any county council-owned land designated for educational purposes, the land was first included in the council's long-term forecasting models and any local plans to see if the land was needed or could be needed in the future.
- The county council was still extending SEND places in mainstream schools and work was continuing with the inclusion services to see what was being proposed for expanding special schools, making sure that it was appropriate



in terms of forecasting, and that the best place was being established to meet that child's needs.

- Regarding forecasting, it was highlighted during the Inquiry Day that some places changed from a hot spot to a cold spot, it was suggested that a letter be written to established schools in areas where they felt destabilised. The committee would receive confirmation once the letter had been circulated.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for answering the committees' questions.

Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

- i. A report to be presented to a future meeting of the committee to consider the new schools programme in Northwest Preston, taking into consideration the outcome of the consultation, feedback from existing schools and what that means in terms of the next stage.

6. Work Programme 2023/24

The committee considered a report which provided information on the work programme for the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee.

It was suggested if the committee meeting scheduled on 1 May 2024 could be moved, as it was the day before the local elections.

It was also noted that attached at Appendix 'B' of the report was the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport responses to the committee's recommendations, following its review of the report on the School Place Planning Inquiry Day on the 20 September 2023 and committee members were asked if they had any comments on the responses.

Among the comments raised included concerns about school transportation, bus routes, bus fares due to the distance a child lived from a school and the lack of public transportation. The Cabinet Member and officers noted the comments raised by the committee.

Resolved: That;

- i. The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24 be noted; and
- ii. The response to recommendations of the School Place Planning Inquiry Day be noted.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.



8. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted the next meeting of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee would take place on Wednesday 13 December 2023 at 10:30am at County Hall, Preston.

H MacAndrew
Director of Law and Governance

County Hall
Preston



Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee
Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 13 December 2023

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;
Delivering better services;

Alternative Provision Strategy
(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:
Dr Sally Richardson, Tel: 07920 086432, Head of Service, Inclusion
Sally.richardson@lancashire.gov.uk

Brief Summary

This report provides an overview of the work that has been completed to date and the action planned to support the implementation of the Alternative Provision Strategy 2023 - 2026. It provides an overview of the current situation and the actions that are underway and will be taken in the future to strengthen the oversight, quality and range of alternative provision in Lancashire.

Recommendation

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i) Reflect on the information provided and;
- ii) Provide comment on the action taken to date and planned for the future and consider further ways to support this area of work.

Background

Alternative provision is defined as follows: education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness, or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

Provision for children who have been excluded must begin by the sixth day of the exclusion. While there is no statutory requirement as to when suitable full-time education should begin for pupils placed in alternative provision for reasons other than exclusion, local authorities are required to ensure that such pupils are placed as quickly as possible. Statutory guidance published by the Department for Education gives an expectation that local authorities should be ready to take responsibility for

any child whose illness will prevent them from attending school for 15 or more school days.

In March 2023, the Department for Education published the SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan in which it set out its ambition for the delivery of alternative provision that is fully integrated with the wider SEND system. This document outlined the government's vision for a three-tier system comprising targeted outreach support within pupils' mainstream school; time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting and longer-term placements to support return to mainstream or a sustainable post-16 destination. The Department for Education has made a commitment to support local authorities' delivery of a single SEND and alternative provision system through the development of new National Standards. The National Standards are currently under development, and it is anticipated these will be published by the end of 2025.

Current Position

Alternative provision in Lancashire is commissioned in diverse ways depending on the individual needs of the child or young person concerned, and includes the use of pupil referral units, colleges, independent training providers and individual tuition. Most alternative provision is provided via pupil referral units in Lancashire.

Nine pupil referral units, two primaries and seven secondaries, have been established in Lancashire to enable the local authority to discharge the above duties in relation to children who have been excluded or who cannot attend for other reasons. The number of permanent exclusions increases between September and July each academic year and increasing numbers of children are presenting with anxiety and other mental health related difficulties that prevent them from attending school since the Covid pandemic. This trend in Lancashire reflects that presented nationally and has resulted in an increasing demand for alternative provision in recent years.

In autumn 2022 there were 420 pupils taking up the 812 places commissioned that year. This meant that at that time 51.7% of the total commissioned capacity had been taken up. In April 2023, there were 862 pupils on roll at secondary pupil referral units which at the time was 132 over commissioned numbers for 2022/23. A decision was taken to increase the number of commissioned places from 812 to 851 in 2023/24. 82 of these places will be for primary aged pupils and the remaining 769 for secondary aged pupils as has been the situation this year. The 2023/24 number of places is consistent with the number commissioned in 2018/19, which was the last year schools were fully operational prior to the pandemic. This increase in demand for pupil referral units relates primarily to the increase in the number of pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools in 2022/23.

291 pupils in year 11 left in July 2023 to move on to other education, employment, or training opportunities, which meant these places were then available at the start of the current academic year.

The number of pupils on roll in maintained pupil referral units in November 2023 rose to 798, which equates to a take up of 94% of the commissioned capacity in 2023/24



and significantly higher than in the 2022/23 academic year at about the same time. Two of the secondary pupil referral units are already over their commissioned numbers, and all others are above 80% capacity. A further 25 places have been commissioned at The Alternative School, a non-maintained provider, to provide pupil referral unit places in locations where there is insufficient commissioned capacity. It is planned that 851 pupil referral unit places will be commissioned for the 2024/25 academic year.

Information about individual pupils' placements provided as part of the census data last year indicated that on average a pupil in Lancashire will spend at least a year in a pupil referral unit following admission. The same data revealed that pupils on intervention places could remain in a pupil referral unit for two years or more. It should be noted however this data is a little misleading because it does not account for pupils provided with very short-term placements who do not appear within the census data. In addition, there was evidence to show that pupils with medical placements have placements that exceed the period of two terms, which is the agreed length of time for these placements. The intention for these placements is that, where possible, they are short term and allow the young person to reintegrate back into mainstream school.

There have been difficulties in ensuring an appropriate and welcoming environment for pupils' return for both groups identified above. Officers are currently working with each of the pupil referral units to identify children who would most benefit from a mainstream place. The intention is to ensure greater clarity at the start of placements about the expectations around reintegration and the ambitions of these pupils.

Most pupil referral units have pupils who have been on roll for more than four years. Last year there were 60 pupils who were not receiving their full-time entitlement to education in a school following their exclusion.

Reintegration rates data is limited although it seems likely that these are below 5%, particularly for older pupils and those who have been subject to permanent exclusion.

It is anticipated that the Education Management System, which will become available in the future, will enable the local authority to have better oversight of pupils' attendance and the use of part-time timetables within mainstream and special schools across the county. There is a commitment by the Attendance Support Team to review attendance with every school annually. These measures will enable the local authority to ensure it is meeting its duties in terms of ensuring all pupils who are unable to attend school for whatever reason receive a suitable education.

Funding

The increase in the number of additional places over commissioned numbers outlined in the preceding section of this report equates to £804k additional funding for the summer term 2022/23. The continued take up of these additional places when considered in the context of the increase in commissioned numbers is likely to present a £1.3m additional pressure to the high needs block funding overall. The budget forecast for 2022/23 was £11.8m. The current forecast for 2023/24 is £15.2m.



Pupil Voice

The Children's Champions produced a report presenting the outcomes of a survey of pupils attending the seven secondary pupil referral units at the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year. The team interviewed 32 pupils with the same questionnaire. Most pupils had been subject to a permanent exclusion, although some were attending a pupil referral unit as part of an intervention or because they had taken up the offer of a medical placement. The purpose of this review was to understand the views of the pupils currently accessing alternative provision so that the information could be used to inform service development and delivery.

The report concluded with some recommendations identifying changes that could be put in place to improve the processes and support available to pupils attending and/or transferring into a pupil referral unit. Pupils reported they would like to be more informed about the reasons behind the decisions that had been made around permanent exclusion, any future placements, and to be more involved in planning for their future. Other findings included a perception that it would be helpful for mainstream schools to be supported to have a better understanding of pupils' needs. It was felt this would support better planning and decision making by the local authority and/or pupil referral units in relation to pupils' integration back into mainstream.

Outcomes for Children

Whilst we have confidence in the work of our pupil referral units it is notable that outcomes for pupils in alternative provision are poor this is a national picture, but we are aware that outcomes for Lancashire do not compare favourably with national measures. The Department for Education research reported that:

- 7% pupils that have been permanently excluded and 18% pupils with multiple suspensions achieve good passes in English and maths GCSEs
- Only 4.5% pupils educated in alternative education achieve a good pass in English and maths GCSE
- >1/3 pupils who completed compulsory school-age education in alternative provision do not go on to employment, education, or training (EET)
- 23% of offenders have been permanently excluded whilst at school
- 58% of young adults in prison were permanently excluded in school.

Attendance rates for pupils attending pupil referral units in Lancashire at the end of the last academic year ranged from 0% to 100%.

Implementation of the Alternative Provision Strategy

An overall approach to alternative provision in Lancashire was agreed in the Alternative Provision Strategy 2023 – 2026 that was refreshed last year, as set out in **Appendix 'A'**. A range of short- and medium-term activity has been agreed to address the ambition of the strategy and the issues identified above, particularly with respect to supporting improved outcomes for children and young people and their reintegration wherever possible back into mainstream school. It is also important to



ensure that children and young people who need additional support and reasonable adjustments to engage in mainstream school have the opportunities they need to achieve success. To do this effectively it is likely that, there needs to be recognition across the system of a need to increase the range of alternative provision where this is appropriate and would better serve pupils' needs, interests, and aspirations.

Short-term Action

Activity is underway to ensure the following is completed within the next six months. This includes/has included:

- 1) Monitoring the impact of action taken because of feedback from pupils attending pupil referral units and gaining further insight into their lived experience to inform the development of services.
- 2) The collation and review of information relating to individual pupils that is captured on the form that is completed to notify the local authority of a pupil's permanent exclusion.
- 3) Ensuring that pupils are well informed about the decisions being made and any resulting actions, this includes much greater clarity about the expected length of stay within a pupil referral unit.
- 4) Developing an agreed approach to support the reintegration of pupils from the pupil referral units and an implementation schedule.
- 5) Strengthening the monitoring arrangements for the pupil referral units, so that for example the use of part-time timetables and attendance data is routinely reported.
- 6) Reviewing the arrangements for all children and young people currently accessing alternative provision for whom the local authority is responsible directly.
- 7) The development of an alternative provision quality framework that can be used to complete quality assurance and safeguarding visits with alternative provision providers.
- 8) Developing a commissioning route for new and potential providers for registered and unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- 9) The development of a short-term alternative provision dashboard that brings together existing data sets, including those relating to pupil referral units.
- 10) Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of officers and all partners that provide or commission alternative provision.
- 11) Developing a communication strategy to support engagement and co-production of the approach to alternative provision.
- 12) Developing a training/communication plan to support engagement, co-production and a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities with respect to alternative provision with partners.
- 13) Using the existing Lancashire inclusion strategic governance structure and education structure to create a clear reporting structure to gain greater assurance around alternative provision. This will require the creation of a

group comprising officers from Inclusion, Commissioning, Education Improvement, Finance, Project Management and Performance Monitoring Teams that can influence change and drive the improvement required. As this is a new group it should be expected that an initial, intense, period of work will be needed to establish reporting and systems, terms of reference, reporting structures, and reporting formats.

Longer-term Actions

- 1) Develop a quality assurance process and team to ensure ongoing checks on alternative provision currently commissioned by the local authority, this could include consideration of a service to schools to act as quality assurance for provision they commission. This work is underway and pilot quality assurance visits have begun. It is hoped that the initial round of visits will be completed in this fiscal year. The process will be reviewed and developed as needed following the pilot period up to the end of this calendar year.
- 2) Develop an alternative provision directory and undertake a review of current offer to map availability and gaps.
- 3) Review all non-registered provisions used by local authority services to create Lancashire database/directory of providers and then consider the additional providers commissioned directly through schools. Whilst the commissioning and review of these service are schools' responsibility there may be an opportunity for an income generating service level agreement around the quality assurance of alternative provision in Lancashire.
- 4) Ensure Education Management Systems development is in line with expectations and will support accurate and up to date recording of information so that the information provided can be used to track impact and to assure leaders of progress and highlight pressures or progress.
- 5) Develop an approach to communication that makes clear what is available in the system currently and the plans to address the gaps that have been identified. The shortfall in provision that has been identified by schools would seem to relate primarily to the following: the availability of alternative provision for behaviour support, with pressures across the SEND system, pressures in schools more generally, a lack of outreach support, perceived and real differences in offer in different areas, and exclusions. Whilst all the areas highlighted by schools are relevant in terms of the local authorities' need to support the provision of quality and timely intervention, the increasing numbers of children being excluded permanently from schools needs to reduce to allow this resource to be reprioritised.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Alternative Provision Strategy 2023 - 2026



Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Risks are identified in the report in terms of the additional pressures to the high needs block funding. There is also a need to improve our attainment levels for young people and consider the risks of them going on to become NEET.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A



Lancashire Alternative Provision Strategy

2023 – 2026



Foreword >>>



Jayne Rear

**County Councillor Jayne Rear
Cabinet Member for
Education and Skills
Lancashire County Council**

For some children and young people in Lancashire, the pathways to achieving a well-rounded education are not always easy.

Our Alternative Provision Strategy aims to ensure all children and young people access quality learning from childhood through to adulthood in the right place, at the right time and in a way that will help them thrive. Some of our goals include reducing exclusions, increasing the number of young people in education, employment and training and increasing the number of children and young people being supported in mainstream provision.

Only by putting the voice of the child or young person at the centre of our decision making and working collaboratively with our partners can we achieve these goals.

By co-designing our alternative provision offer with children, young people, their families and the practitioners who work with them, we can ensure that arrangements work for everyone involved, but crucially that the child or young person is receiving a quality education that works for them.

We know that learning does not look the same for every child. Our outreach first approach means we can tailor our support, whether that is providing targeted support in mainstream schools or arranging placements to help children and young people to develop the skills and confidence they need to continue learning and thriving in our county.

We hope that the Alternative Provision Strategy helps us to realise our vision; that children and young people achieve their full potential in education, learning and future employment.

Our vision for Alternative Provision in Lancashire



Children and young people achieve their full potential in education, learning and future employment





Introduction

The Alternative Provision Strategy 2020-2026 has been created in response to local priorities and national initiatives with key stakeholders.

This updated strategy builds on the existing Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy 2020-2024 and is a response to the SEND and AP Improvement Plan published by the Department for Education in March 2023 which follows from the SEND Green Paper; right support, right place, right time. It is consistent with both the Lancashire SEND Plan 2021-2025 and Lancashire Education Strategy 2022-2025.

In shaping our priorities, we have been guided by feedback from our partners, including young people and practitioners working across education, health and care services. This feedback

has led us to focus on the following outcomes as identified in the previous strategy:

- support a needs-led approach so that children and young people are supported more flexibly and innovatively with a reduced dependency on full time placements in alternative provision based upon an outreach first approach
- support improved outcomes for children and young people at risk of exclusion by identifying need earlier and targeting preventative support
- redress the unsustainable budget pressures associated with the current level of demand

We recognise the importance of building on our partnerships and working together so we continue to make a positive difference to the lives of all our children and young people in Lancashire.



Our approach to Alternative Provision

We have high aspirations for all children and young people in Lancashire, whatever their starting point. We are committed to ensuring all children and young people are able to access quality learning from childhood through to adulthood in the right place, at the right time and in a way that will help them thrive.

The updated Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-2026 maintains the key principles that were identified as part of the previous strategy:

- increase the number of children and young people supported in mainstream provision
- reduce the number of exclusions from our schools
- ensure appropriate use of home tuition
- stop off-rolling, leaving young people without education
- ensure appropriate use of specialist provision
- ensure specialist provision is in the right locations
- increase the number of young people in education, employment and training





Outreach First delivery model based on a three-tier system of support

Targeted support in mainstream schools for children and young people whose needs lead to behaviour that disrupts theirs or others' learning, but for whom a strong school behaviour culture is alone not sufficient. For example, through 'on call' advice for mainstream schools, coaching, delivering self-regulation classes for small groups or one-to-one support

Time-limited placements in alternative provision for those who need more intensive support to address behaviour or anxiety and re-engage in learning. Schools should use their powers of off-site direction, ensuring that children and young people are dual registered and are supported to return to their original school as soon as is appropriate

Transitional placements for those children and young people who will not return to their previous school but will be supported to make the transition to a different school when they are ready, or to a suitable post-16 destination. Alternative provision schools will support these children and young people to recover as much academic progress as possible and have the skills and confidence to thrive in what they do next



How the Alternative Provision Strategy will deliver improvement

We will work collaboratively with partners and organisations and listen to the voice of children, young people and their families to continuously improve outcomes for all. We will focus activity to:

- improve access to training and resources
- enhance our outreach first approach, based on multi agency support
- move towards collective system-wide decision making and responsibility
- undertake gap analysis of alternative provision across Lancashire
- co-design and develop intervention support and alternative provision, including post 16 provision
- strengthen commissioning arrangements
- develop a framework for alternative provision
- refine and develop funding arrangements
- strengthen our approach to governance
- strengthen our policies and procedures
- strengthen the oversight of alternative provision
- develop greater sharing of data and local intelligence
- develop alternative provision good practice guide



Implementation of the Alternative Provision Strategy 2023 – 2026

We will produce an annual delivery plan identifying clear and aspirational yet achievable outcomes, measures and timeframes.

The Education Scrutiny Committee will receive a copy of the delivery plan at least annually to scrutinise and challenge performance against the targets agreed at the SEND Partnership Board and Lancashire Education Partnership Board. The Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-2026 will be reviewed annually up to 2026.

Our annual plan will identify how we will work in partnership across all sectors and will be co-ordinated through the following work streams:



Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Caring for the vulnerable;
Delivering better services;

SEND Sufficiency Plan

Contact for further information:
Dr Sally Richardson, Tel: 07920 086432, Head of Service, Inclusion
Sally.richardson@lancashire.gov.uk

Brief Summary

This report provides a brief overview of developments to date in relation to increasing the range and availability of more specialist provision across the county. It also provides an overview of action currently being undertaken to increase the number of special school places for September 2024 and how specialist provision will be aligned with mainstream school place planning in the future.

Recommendation

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i) Reflect on the information provided and;
- ii) Provide comment on the proposals that are in train to develop the range and availability of specialist provision across Lancashire and consider ways to further support work in this area.

Detail

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2024 was developed in response to the increase in demand for specialist provision for children and young people, in particular areas across Lancashire, and within the context of increased pressure on the high needs block funding. The implementation of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy enables the county council to fulfil its statutory duties in relation to the provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

In line with the principles and priorities identified within the SEND Sufficiency Strategy, 306 more special school places have been created since September 2021. In addition, 112 of the 244 Special Educational Needs unit places identified in the strategy are currently available, 48 should become available before or at the start of the 2024/25 academic year and another 56 are under consideration.

There has been 8% growth in the number of Education, Health and Care plans maintained by the local authority since 2017, however this increased to 10.6% in 2022 and there has been a further increase of 13.8% between November and January 2023. At the time of writing the local authority maintains 10,941 education, health and care plans. Growth in educational, health and care plans were below the national average prior to 2022, at which point it became more aligned with the national figure. Currently there is no benchmarking data available for 2023.

There has been a 4% increase in the number of special school places in Lancashire on average each year since 2018/19. It should be noted that 9% more children are educated in special schools in Lancashire, in comparison with the average across local authorities in England. There is evidence that greater inclusion in mainstream settings can improve the academic achievement for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as their sense of belonging. To manage the increasing demand for more specialist provision across the county further, special and mainstream schools were invited to submit expressions of interest in July in relation to the following:

- The expansion of special school provision, either through the expansion of the existing school site or through the development of satellite provision.
- The creation of Special Educational Needs units attached to mainstream primary and secondary schools.

15 expressions of interest were received with respect to the expansion of special schools that provide support for pupils with significant learning difficulties and/or autism, two for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs and three from schools or colleges interested in developing post-19 provision.

A further paper was presented to Cabinet in December 2023 which sought approval for completion of feasibility studies and initiation of informal consultations needed to create 205 additional special school places for September 2024, comprising 104 for children entering reception and/or of primary age, 76 for children transitioning into secondary school and 25 post-16 placements.

The distribution of these placements across the county are as presented in the table below.

Geographical Location	Location for additional capacity:	Primary Places Needed	Secondary Places Needed	Specialist College
South – Preston, South Ribble, Chorley, and West Lancashire	Leyland	39	Learning Disabilities/Autism Spectrum Disorder – 10 Social, Emotional, Mental Health – 19	16



East- Burnley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, and Rosendale	Burnley	42	Learning Disabilities/Autism Spectrum Disorder – 10 Social, Emotional, Mental Health – 15	
North – Lancaster,	Lancaster	11	Learning Disabilities/Autism Spectrum Disorder – 6 Social, Emotional, Mental Health – 9	9
North – Fylde and Wyre	Fylde and Wyre	12	Social, Emotional, Mental Health - 7	

There may need to be a consideration for identifying suitable spaces within a central location with easy access to the M6 motorway, to be used as a satellite provision that pupils with social, emotional and mental health issues in the North area can access.

It is anticipated that most of these additional school placements will be created through the expansion on the existing sites of special schools that put forward an expression of interest, although it may be that some of these places will be developed through satellite provision. Work is underway to complete the required feasibility studies and ensure plans are in place to create the additional places required.

From January 2024 it is anticipated that special school place planning will be aligned with that for mainstream school places and thus there will be a joint approach across the county.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

The county council and partners across education, health and care are required to work together to plan for and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2014.

If the decision was not to proceed with the proposals detailed in this report, the risk would be insufficient places and potential for increased costs out of area. This proposal, which will be presented to Cabinet on 7 December 2023, mitigates the risk of this and the county council failing in its duty to provide sufficient school places.



Property Asset Management

Any works necessary in respect of increasing the availability of special school provision is identified through the feasibility studies.

Financial

Any building works that are agreed by the authority outlined in the proposals to increase the availability of special needs provision throughout the county will be funded via the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation. This is grant funding and the amounts of funding available may limit the schemes that are deliverable.

By increasing the county council's internal Special School Provision, this will enable progress to be made towards keeping up with the demand for special school places and reducing reliance on the use of independent school placements which present a growing pressure on high needs block funding.

The demand increased by 10.7% in 2022 in comparison with 2021. Prior to this, the average increase in demand has been 8% per year. The indicative funding allocations for the High Needs Block in the revenue budget are expected to increase by 3% per year. This is likely to increase the gap between expenditure and funding over the next few years. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities sufficiency work is being carried out to address these issues, and to prevent Lancashire County Council going into a High Needs Deficit Position. The additional internal places created will therefore help to support the growing financial pressures on the High Needs Revenue Budget.

There are sufficient funds currently uncommitted to meet the costs of this project.

Equality and Cohesion

This proposal impacts on both the age (young people) and disability protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and is designed to contribute positively to the Public Sector Equality Duty's general aim of advancing equality of opportunity and its related aim of increasing participation in public life for these children and young people, their families and carers.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A



Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee
Meeting to be held on Wednesday, 13 December 2023

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
N/A;

Work Programme 2023/24
(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:
Misbah Mahmood, Tel: 01772 530818, Senior Democratic Services Officer,
Misbah.mahmood@lancashire.gov.uk

Brief Summary

This report provides members of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee with the committee's work programme for 2023/24.

Recommendation

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the work programme for 2023/24.

Detail

The work programme for 2023/24 was drafted following the Portfolio and Service Area Update for the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee, held on 12 June 2023. Following this meeting, the draft programme was finalised, reported, and approved at the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board on 25 July 2023.

Attached at **Appendix 'A'** is a copy of the work programme for the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee for 2023/24, the committee is asked to note the work programme.

Included as part of the work programme will be a record of all recommendations agreed at previous committee meetings. This record will be updated for each meeting to allow members to review progress, outcomes and any further review required. It is proposed that this will be the focus of the work programme report at committee meetings.

Since the last meeting of the committee in November 2023, there have been no further updates to the committee's recommendations from the 2023/24 work programme.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Work Programme for the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee 2023/24

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

N/A

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A



Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-2024

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Programme details the planned activity to be undertaken during the forthcoming municipal year.

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee has responsibility to review and scrutinise the county council's Children's Services functions, other matters affecting children, young people and families, and to satisfy the statutory responsibilities related to the education functions of a Children's Services Authority. Accordingly, the work of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee will focus on the following areas:

1. Children's Social Care
2. Children's Services
3. Education and Skills

The programme is determined by the Committee following a planning session at the start of the municipal year. This includes provision for the rights of county councillors to ask for any matter to be considered by the committee.

Coordination of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee programmes is undertaken by the Scrutiny Management Board. This is in line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Terms of Reference, as set out in the county council's [Constitution](#) (Part 2 Article 5).

Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member portfolios aligned to the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee's responsibilities are:

[County Councillor Cosima Towneley](#), Cabinet Member for Children and Families

[County Councillor Jayne Rear](#), Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

The areas of responsibility for each Cabinet Member are set out at [Appendix A – Scheme of Delegation to Cabinet Members](#) to the county council's constitution.

Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-2024

	Committee Meeting Date					
Scrutiny Activity	20 Sept 2023	1 Nov 2023	13 Dec 2023	31 Jan 2024	13 Mar 2024	15 May 2024
Service Area Report to Committee	Academisation / Commercialisation Education Strategy Annual Report Report on School Place Planning Inquiry Day	EET/NEET (as well as connecting with local businesses to create opportunities)	Alternative Provision Strategy SEND Sufficiency Plan	School Transport	Family Safeguarding and Complex Safeguarding (include update on Project Searchlight)	Strengthening the Youth Offer across Lancashire Lancashire Education Strategy 2025-2028
Annual Report to Committee		School Place Planning Annual Update		Education Attainment Data	Annual Quality Assurance Checks	Youth Justice Board Annual Report
Update Report for Information		Education Attainment Overview Update			Education Strategy Update	
Short Scrutiny (Rapporteur) Review or Other Scrutiny Review Such as a Deep Dive			Briefing Note on the broader work and implications of the House Project.		A Deep Dive Session to be held in April (date tbc) on Inclusion (including mainstream), Mental Health, Delivering the Where our Children Live programme, Family Hubs and what we are doing in Schools	
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Children and Families and	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Children and Families

Required Attendance	Cabinet Member for Education and Skills			for Highways and Transport	Member for Education and Skills	
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Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee Recommendations Progress

Meeting Date	Report Title	Corporate Priority	Recommendation	Progress Detail
20 September 23	Academisation / Commercialisation	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	That: i. The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee thank the Education Improvement Service and support the Academisation and Commercialisation report. ii. An update on Academisation and Commercialisation be provided to the committee in 12 months.	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – awaiting response.
20 September 23	Education Strategy Annual Report	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	That: i. An update on Home Education (to include the number of children who are home educated in Lancashire, and where possible, attainment data on what they go on to achieve e.g., at college) to be presented to the committee at the January 2024 meeting, or at an appropriate time. ii. A piece of work to be completed to understand the reasons behind persistent absence, using data from the termly visits conducted by Attendance Workers, to be circulated to the committee when available. iii. Details of the number of permanent exclusions, broken down by district, including details of any specific clusters and trends to be circulated to the committee. iv. Details of the percentage and raw numbers of families not receiving any of their top three choices	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – awaiting response.

			<p>in secondary school admissions, and a breakdown by district to be circulated to the committee.</p> <p>v. Details of the cost to schools for a Behaviour Consultant to be circulated to the committee.</p> <p>vi. A structure chart or diagram to illustrate the different services which are offered to schools, including their roles and responsibilities be circulated to the committee at an appropriate time.</p>	
20 September 23	Report on School Place Planning Inquiry Day (Mainstream and SEND) and School Transport	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services; Protecting our Environment	<p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A piece of work to take place on school place planning and how it has been distorted by various factors such as margin of error above 5% and new housing developments. Faith schools to also be included in this review. 2. Consideration be given to what issues cause inaccurate forecasting when the margin of error is above 5%. 3. Consideration be given to what measures can be taken to ameliorate the destabilisation of established schools when the margin of error is approaching 5%. 4. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to consider the reinstatement of the Safer Travel Unit, as and when the budget allows. 5. A report be presented to the Children, Families and Skills committee setting out how we work closer with the district planning authorities to ensure that we maximise developer contributions. Progress to be reported and updated on a regular basis on the Dashboard. 6. Consideration be given to a review of the procurement process for school transport 	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport. A response has been provided and will be shared with the committee as part of the Work Programme report at its meeting on the 1 November 23.

			<p>contracts in relation to environmentally friendly issues such as cleaner, low carbon and greener options and for this to be considered as part of the scoring process. Review to include types of fuel, vehicle age and plans for electric/hydrogen vehicles etc.</p> <p>7. That the Education Improvement Team liaise with schools and consider using the safest routes (not necessarily the shortest) to schools when assessing eligibility for home to school transport applications and proximity of schools to homes.</p> <p>8. That the School Transport Team and School Place Planning team have a closer working relationship with the aim of endeavouring to avoid an allocation of a place for which school transport is eligible but cannot be provided due to a lack of capacity.</p> <p>9. That a review of School Transport take place in conjunction with the Public Transport Team, to consider how best to increase uptake of greener school transport options and bus use more widely though better service provision. The aim of the review will be to provide sufficient places for all those who want to use the bus (notwithstanding the fundamental statutory obligation to provide for children who qualify for home to school transport). The review could explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. increased co-ordination of commercial, subsidised, school buses, and where appropriate, school-commissioned bus services; b. making better use of existing combined resources, c. more flexible fares for young people, and co-ordination with the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) 	
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			10. That the Cabinet Members for Education and Skills and Highways and Transport attend a meeting of the Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies.	
1 November 2023	Young People in Education, Employment or Training and Young People not in Education, Employment or Training	Caring for the vulnerable; Delivering better services	<p>Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Youth Futures Team be invited to attend a future meeting of the Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee to talk about their work, the progress they have made and any challenges and barriers they have faced. <p>Actions for officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KS4 to KS5 Transition Booklet to be emailed out to committee members. - A request to the colleges for any data held on young people in EET, specifically relating to Refugees to be shared with the committee. - In regard to Tables 7 – 9 in the report showing the successful outcomes/progression routes achieved by the cohort of Lancashire's young people in care or leaving care who are engaged with the Employment and Support Team, if there a reason why it appears public sector opportunities in Lancashire are reducing? 	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – awaiting response.
1 November 2023	School Place Planning Annual Report	Delivering better services; Caring for the vulnerable; Protecting our environment; Supporting economic growth	<p>Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A report to be presented to a future meeting of the committee to consider the new schools programme in Northwest Preston, taking into consideration the outcome of the consultation, feedback from existing schools and what that means in terms of the next stage. 	The recommendations have been shared with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – awaiting response.

			Action for officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Regarding forecasting, it was highlighted during the Inquiry Day that some areas changed from a hot spot to a cold spot, with more than 20 places available in existing schools, it was agreed that a letter be written to established primary schools, in areas where they felt destabilised. Officers to check if a letter has gone out.	
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