

PUBLIC

MINUTES of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER – EDUCATION** held on 8 June 2021.

PRESENT

Cabinet Member - Councillor A Dale

Also in attendance – Councillors R George, N Gourlay, J Patten and G Hickton.

01/21 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Young People held on 13 April 2021 be received.

02/21 **GRADUATED RESPONSE FOR INDIVIDUAL PUPILS (GRIP)** The GRIP process was a Derbyshire County Council policy initiative to deliver an 'Element 3' type funding stream to support inclusion and learning for young children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) in mainstream schools. The concept of this discretionary policy was rooted in the graduated response described within the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 Statutory guidance 2015.

The children and young people who receive GRIP allocations had life-long SEND associated diagnosed learning or physical/sensory disabilities, or enduring and very significant communication or social, emotional and mental health needs. Data confirms that of the 2316 pupils who have received a GRIP allocation, 75.4% continued to receive support from the High Needs Block funding.

The local authority needed to ensure that the GRIP process supports schools to meet need to avoid them resorting to requests for more costly EHC needs assessment. It was equally important that parents have confidence that the schools to provide support and interventions to pupils with SEND quickly and effectively without the need to apply for an EHCP. It was also important to streamline processes to generate capacity in the SEND locality teams so that they work with schools over the quality of the applications and play their part in processing the applications efficiently.

A Call for Views on sufficiency of SEND provision was completed in January 2021 and positive comments were received on the value of GRIP funding meeting needs early and giving schools the flexibility to support children and young people quickly and without a formal assessment of needs. Negative comments mainly referred to the administration of the process which was considered unwieldy and as causing delays. The report detailed the key issues and the recommendations set out the proposed changes to the administration of the Graduated Response for Individual Pupils (GRIP) for which approval was requested.

RESOLVED to (1) extend the funding allocation cycle to cover the full length of a Key Stage in which the application has been made (i.e. For the allocation of additional funding to only expire at the end of Year 2, Year 6, Year 9 and Year 11) rather than chronological time periods of one year, which could end at any time in that year;

(2) replace the current cycle of yearly applications, which must contain detailed review information, with 'annual evaluations' carried out by schools and support services with parents. These will be recorded in the child's school records and available to the SEND Locality Teams officers as part of their ongoing work to support schools in developing and delivering inclusive provision for all children with SEND;

(3) to remove the clause agreed in October 2018 which commits Derbyshire County Council to backdate the funding to the time of application if there is a delay in decision making. However, in exceptional circumstances if the application was subject to an unnecessary delay then the payment will be backdated and

(4) that a definition for "exceptional circumstances" and "unnecessary delay" be delegated to the Cabinet Member, in consultation with the SEND service, to ensure there was clarity over what the threshold would be for backdated payments being made.

03/21 DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT OUTTURN 2020-21

The Cabinet Member received a report on the Revenue Budget outturn of the Dedicated Schools Grant (Young People portfolio) for 2020-21. The significant areas of expenditure and key variances were detailed in the report.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and 6th form grant income received by the Authority in 2020-21 was £368.032m. This, together with the release of holding rates refunds in respect of school of £0.721m, totalled income available to fund expenditure of £368.753m in 202-21.

Full year expenditure amounted to £370.037m and compared with the income there was an overspend of £1.284m. However, this included an underspend of £1.370m which was ring-fenced to schools and a further £0.850m underspend of school growth funding, £0.322m of which has been earmarked to contribute to pre and post opening grants to planned new schools. The overspend falling to the Authority was therefore £2.976m.

The Authority would report a DSG deficit reserve at the end of 2020-21 of £6.187m. Other DSG committed reserves totalling £5.030m offset this deficit reserve within the Authority's accounts and the reported DSG position was a net deficit reserve of £1.157m.

Following consultation with Local Authorities (LA) and other stakeholders, the Department for Education have amended the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations and a DSG deficit must be carried forward to be dealt with from future years' DSG income, unless the Secretary of State authorises the LA not to do this. The Schools Forum as a first step agreed in January 2020 to allocate only some of the 2020-21 Pupil Growth fund within the Schools Block. The Forum agreed to leave £1.325m of the £3.428m grant for 2020-21 unallocated as a positive contribution towards the shortfall and the reported position for 2020-21 reflects this contribution.

RESOLVED to note the report.