

<b>Children and Young People Select Committee</b>
<b>Additionally Resourced SEND Provision</b>
<b>Scrutiny Review</b>
<b>Outline Scope</b>

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<b>Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</b>  <p>This work aligns with the Council's priorities to ensure that all children have a bright future and a sense of belonging and giving children the best possible start in life, this is greater achieved when our children are educated and build connections within the borough. It aligns with the council vision to have a sustainable community where everyone belongs and is valued.</p> <p>The review supports Stockton on Tees Plan Priority One – The best start in life to achieve big ambitions and key move – Giving children and young people the best possible start, in an inclusive community where everyone can thrive.</p>	
<b>What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?</b>  <p>Since 2017, Stockton on Tees have had an enhanced mainstream school (EMS) model in place which supports children who require additional support than normally available in mainstream when they have a particular area of need i.e. a cognition and learning difficulty. In recent years, these placements have been overpopulated (for example for children who have language and communication needs) and underutilised in other areas (HI/VI &amp; Physical Needs), resulting in high levels of high needs funding been distributed to settings without the children in situ to receive support.</p> <p>In October 2024, the Council began a consultation to repurpose it's EMS provision into Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) and SEND Units. This would allow for the flexibility to meet the demand for placement, give parents the right to choose these placements for their</p>	

children and also bring the provision in Stockton on Tees in line with Department for Education guidance by registering the provisions as resourced provision.

Additionally resourced provisions in mainstream are designed to support children with SEND who require more tailored support but do not require a place in a special school.

In December 2024, the government requested that all Councils begin to consider creating resourced provision within their mainstream's schools, with an announcement of further funding awaiting in Spring 2025. This new funding can be used to adapt classrooms to be more accessible for children with SEND, and to create specialist facilities within mainstream schools that can deliver more intensive support adapted to suit the pupils' needs and this coincides with the work already in development in Stockton.

It is anticipated that creation of these provisions will reduce the number of children who are attending schools out of the area to have their needs met, this reduces the reliance on community transport and ensures that our children can foster a peer group within the local community, also potentially reducing future reliance on social and welfare services, such as housing or adult social care. It is also anticipated that placing children in the right provision at the earliest opportunity will to some extent reduce suspensions and exclusions and increase attendance within the borough.

Sustainable investment in inclusive school facilities future proofs educational infrastructure, creating accessible environments that benefit not just children with SEND, but the wider school community, leading to more inclusive, economically resilience and sustainable educational settings.

The Council is currently spending £1.9m on EMS provisions for 209 places in Stockton schools. The agreed plan is to transfer these into SEN Units/ARPs and creating up to 100 additional places for children across the borough. There has been an agreement to invest £730k per year (assuming all placements are full) from high needs funding in addition to current spend. This will be in place from September 2025.

This will ultimately save £5.3m of High Needs funding per year (assuming all places are filled).

	2023-24 £m	2024-25 £m	2025-26 £m	2026-27 £m	2027-28 £m
Unmitigated Cumulative DSG deficit	3.57	5.31	11.51	21.24	34.84
Increase capacity in SBC mainstream prim/sec schools (cumulative savings).		(1.29)	(6.55)	(13.35)	(23.64)
% of overall deficit					67.8%

Cost and savings based on an additional 100 places:

Financial Year	2025/26 (part yr)	2026/27 (full yr)	2027/28 (full yr)	Total
Cost of 100 places in Independent Special #	£3.5m	£6m	£6m	£15.5m
Additional cost of 100 places in SEN Units/ARPs	£430k	£730k	£730k	£1.89m
Annual saving against unmitigated forecast	£3.07m	£5.27m	£5.27m	£13.61m

# Based on average £60k p.a.

\*\* Assume all places filled from September 2025

In January 2025, Cabinet received a report detailing the outcome of consultation relating to increasing capacity in mainstream schools within Stockton-on-Tees, by transferring current Enhanced Mainstream Schools (EMS) to Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) and SEN Units. The consultation was largely positive and Cabinet:

1. Supported the recommendation to transfer Enhanced Mainstream Schools to ARP and SEN Units from September 2025.
2. Agreed to invest up to an additional £730,000 p.a. into these provisions from the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.
3. Agreed to allocate £85,000 from the High Needs provision capital allocations for investment in the SEND Unit at Preston Primary School to increase capacity from 8 to 16 places in September 2025.

A number of schools have applied to be additionally resourced provision. However, interest from the secondary sector has been disappointing and some secondary schools with EMS have chosen not to transfer into ARPS, meaning there are less secondary schools involved in the process.

The purpose of this scrutiny will be to receive update on the implementation of the transfer from September 2025 and engage with the secondary schools to secure additional applications from the secondary sector and fully understand the barriers to the schools becoming ARPS, identifying ways in which we may overcome this to secure the provision required for children and young people in the borough.

Not having a full complement of secondary schools taking up the places risks undermining the effectiveness and reach of this key element of the local SEND Strategy and means that there may be implications for children upon transition to secondary that there may not be the same type or level of support available to them, potentially creating pressure on special school places and missed opportunities for inclusive education in mainstream settings.

**The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:**

- How will the transfer improve the outcomes for children with special educational needs across our Borough?
- How does the project support the Council's vision and strategy for SEND provision?
- What does DfE Guidance tell us?
- Will the changes ensure that there is sufficient and suitable educational provision for SEND pupils in both primary and secondary?
- What are the barriers to secondary schools becoming additionally resourced provision?
- How can the number of ARP placements in secondary be increased?
- To what extent do families and schools understand the changes and how will they be engaged during implementation?
- Can lessons be learnt from the primary ARP model and the higher uptake?
- Is the funding provided to ARP adequate and sustainable for them to provide the support needed?

**Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?**

Cabinet, schools, parents, other stakeholders.

**Expected duration of review and key milestones:**

Five months:

Scope and Project Plan – 11 June 2025

Evidence gathering – June to October 2025

Draft Recommendations – 12 November 2025

Final Report – 17 December 2025 Submission to Cabinet – 15 January 2026	
<b>What information do we need?</b>  <b>Existing information</b> (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):  Legislative background DfE Guidance – SEND Code of Practice 2015 Review of Enhanced Mainstream Schools – Consultation Document October 2024 Cabinet reports – September 2024 and January 2025 Consultation responses from parents, schools and partner agencies. ARP Policy May 2025 Service Level Agreement – ARP Options Appraisal – December 2024 Local Area Inclusion Plan December 2024  <b>New information:</b>  Views of Headteachers, specifically those in secondary schools Views of parents Views of partner agencies such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy. Records of monitoring Comparisons from other local authority models.	
<b>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence?</b> (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)  Council Officers  Secondary Heads  Stockton Parent Carer Forum  North East and North Cumbria ICB	<b>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</b>  Introductory Presentations  Legislative and financial overview  Parent/ Carer Perspective  Issues/ feedback
<b>How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</b>  Committee meetings Visits to primary and secondary schools with ARP provision – early September Meetings with Trusts and secondary schools without ARP provision – late September/ early Oct	
<b>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</b>  As above.	
<b>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</b>  The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics, including Disability.  The Council is under a duty to:	

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The review will contribute towards meeting the Council's requirements under this Duty, particularly in relation to the outcomes for more vulnerable children.

Completion of an Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) will be integral to the Select Committee review.

**How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?**

Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023:

All children and families get the best start in life.

All people in Stockton-on-Tees live well and live longer.

All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities.

**Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:**

- To identify solutions to the ongoing sufficiency difficulties, ensuring that children in Stockton on Tees have access to the most appropriate support to meet their special educational needs.
- To ensure that SEND provision in mainstream schools in Stockton on Tees is accessible, effective and sustainable.
- The review could help challenge any misconceptions and shift views and practice in secondary schools to allow for more opportunities to access support for children and young people.

<b>Project Plan</b>			
<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Details/Activities</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Scoping of Review</b>	Information gathering	23 May 2025	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
<b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	29 May 2025	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member, Director, Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
<b>Agree Scope and Project Plan</b>	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee  Introductory Presentation	11 June 2025	Select Committee
<b>Publicity of Review</b>	N/A		
<b>Obtaining Evidence</b>	Introductory presentation  Stockton Parent Carer Forum North East and North Cumbria ICB  Kerry Coe - Primary Head Andrew Murphy – Sec Head  Feedback from Trust and Secondary Visits	11 June 2025  16 July 2025  17 September 2025  15 October 2025	Select Committee
<b>Members decide recommendations and findings</b>	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	12 November 2025	Select Committee (Informal Session)
<b>Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders</b>	Circulation of Report	November 2025	Scrutiny Officer
<b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	3 December 2025	Select Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, Cabinet Member, Director, Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
<b>Final Agreement of Report by Select Committee</b>	Approval of final report by CYP Select Committee	17 December 2025	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
<b>Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny</b>	Consideration of report	20 January 2026	Executive Scrutiny Committee
<b>Report to Cabinet/Approving Body</b>	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	15 January 2026	Cabinet