

Children and Young People Select Committee Scrutiny Review of Additionally Resourced SEND Provision – Executive Summary

Summary

- 1.1. This report summarises the findings of the Children and Young People Select Committee's scrutiny review of Additionally Resourced SEND Provision.
- 1.2. At the outset of the review a number of schools had applied to be additionally resourced provision. However, interest from the secondary sector had been disappointing and some secondary schools with Enhanced Mainstream Schools (EMS) provision had chosen not to transfer into Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs).
- 1.3. The purpose of the scrutiny was therefore to receive an update on the implementation of the transfer from September 2025 and engage with the secondary schools to encourage additional applications from the secondary sector. The Select Committee wanted to fully understand the barriers to schools becoming ARPs and identify ways that that these could be overcome to secure the provision required for children and young people in the Borough.
- 1.4. The Committee were mindful that not having a full complement of secondary schools taking up the places risked undermining the effectiveness and reach of this key element of the local Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy and meant that there might be implications for children upon transition to secondary. For example, there might 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.
- 1.5. The Committee agreed the following key lines of enquiry for their work:
 - 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?
- 1.6. Contributions were obtained from Council Officers, Stockton Parent Carer Liaison Forum, North East and North Cumbria ICB and Stockton-on-Tees Primary and Secondary Schools.
- 1.7. Early in the scrutiny review, the Government announced that it would be publishing a White Paper outlining the intended approach to SEND reform. The announcement came amid increasing calls for action regarding the rising number of registered SEND pupils and the associated challenges faced by councils. Following the announcement, the Select Committee decided to pause the review to await the detail of the White Paper.

- 1.8. In May 2026 the Select Committee received a presentation on the White Paper and considered the implications for their work. The Select Committee agreed to summarise the evidence collected and key findings and advise Cabinet that they would be concluding their work given that the Government was now making plans to direct all schools to have Inclusion Hubs.

Key Findings and Conclusions

- There has been a rise in demand for SEND provision, including increasing EHCP numbers, with a projected further 9% increase, placing ongoing pressure on the system
 - Parents have low confidence in mainstream secondary provision, with 90% expressing concern that needs cannot be met without additional specialist support. Feedback from families highlights insufficient capacity, limited choice and gaps in provision, alongside practical barriers such as distance and transport. Parents report significant concerns about children's wellbeing, including anxiety, school refusal and risk of harm where needs are not adequately met, and strongly favour smaller, specialist or adapted environments. There is a consistent call from parents for a more flexible, needs-led system, with greater emphasis on tailored support, continuity, and meaningful parental involvement
 - The ARP model significantly increased local capacity, with 155 additional places created across primary and secondary phases, improving the availability of SEND provision within mainstream settings
 - The development of ARPs was strongly collaborative, involving the Council, schools, health partners and families
 - Early evidence indicates that ARPs are enabling better outcomes for children and more inclusive practice
 - Schools report that ARPs and inclusive approaches are having a positive impact on pupil outcomes, including improved attendance, engagement, independence and achievement
 - Inclusive practice is also benefiting the wider school community, with improved staff skills, stronger school ethos and greater acceptance of diversity
 - Site visits confirmed that inclusive, well-led school environments can deliver strong outcomes, even with high proportions of SEND and disadvantaged pupils
 - The national SEND White Paper introduces significant future changes, including a shift away from ARPs and SEND units towards school-led inclusion hubs and a stronger universal offer. These reforms will require the Council to adapt its current model
- 1.9. Overall, the evidence shows that the move from EMS to ARPs and SEND Units has been a positive and necessary step in modernising SEND provision in Stockton-on-Tees. It has created additional capacity, improved local access to education, and strengthened inclusive practice within mainstream schools. Feedback from school visits and early indications suggest better outcomes for children and a more sustainable financial position for the local authority.
- 1.10. Looking ahead, the Council will need to adapt its current model to respond to national SEND reforms, which may require further transformation towards inclusion-focused approaches within mainstream schools. Ongoing focus on early intervention, workforce capacity, and co-production with families will be critical to ensuring that all children with SEND receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time.

Recommended

- 1.11. That Cabinet note the contents of the report.