



## PEOPLE DIRECTORATE

### Special Provision Capital Fund – Consultation Document

#### 1.0 Introduction

In August 2017 the Department for Education issued guidance to all local authorities advising that the Government had committed £215 million of capital funding to help local authorities create new school places and improve existing facilities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. Local authorities were advised that they can use the funding to improve provision for those children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans in establishments with a Good or better Ofsted inspection outcome. Halton's funding allocation is £500,000 over a 3 year period i.e. £166,666 per year in 2018/19, 2019/20, and a final payment in 2020/21.

#### 2.0 Identifying Halton's priority of need

A number of reviews of various elements of special educational needs provision have recently been undertaken. These include a full Joint Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability Inspection by Ofsted, a Commissioned Services Report on Out of Borough Special Educational Needs provision, a report on High Needs Funding to Halton's Schools Forum, and a review of the current provision for supporting Halton students who present with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). A number of key themes, findings/recommendations from these reports were identified and they include:

- The largest area of spend on independent and out-borough provision was on children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs;
- Ofsted in their last Joint Local Area SEND Inspection (March 2017) commented "There has been a sharp increase in the proportion of children and young people with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) issues. This is increasing the number of children and young people who are persistently absent and/or being excluded from school.....Leaders are working with schools and settings on a number of initiatives to meet the needs of these children and young people but there is shared concern that current demand is outweighing the support available";
- The cost of meeting out-borough placements as at February 2017 was £2,676,524 (this figure did not include transport costs for those children);
- The estimated overspend on the High Needs budget for 2017/18 is likely to be circa £2M;
- Feedback from primary and secondary head teacher colleagues at Halton Association of Primary Head Teachers and Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers meetings has confirmed a concern with regard to the number of children displaying increased social, emotional and mental health related issues.

### **3.0 Financial Implications of current provision**

In addition to the above, the Local Authority has also undertaken a comprehensive review of its expenditure against the four broad categories of need as set out in the Department for Education and Department of Health “Special educational needs and disabilities Code of Practice: 0 to 25”, the four categories of need being:

- Communication and Interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical needs

The principal finding from this review identified that 74% of the total expenditure on supporting Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs is spent on placements in the independent sector (either in or out-borough). At the time of writing (December 2017) circa £1.7M is being spent on independent provision to support children and young people with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs, with the total expenditure in this area being circa £2.3M.

### **4.0 Recent Developments**

To address the challenges faced across the borough the following action has been taken:

- A Nurture Strategy has been developed and promoted to all schools and settings. Training has been provided and a nurture network group established;
- To ensure there is a more consistent and transparent approach to addressing the needs of children with challenging behaviour including SEMH a protocol has been launched for all schools to use;
- To provide the specialist training, advice and guidance schools and broker support for schools dealing with children and young people with challenging behaviour a specialist Behaviour Support Team is being developed;
- To provide a secondary vocational alternative provision curriculum a new skills based centre is being developed at Astmoor, and
- To quality assure out of borough provision as well as manage the market and seek opportunities to bring children and young people back into local provision a SEN Commissioning post is being established funded from School Forum.

### **5.0 Next steps**

To enable the Local Authority to receive the central government Special Provision Capital Fund the Local Authority is required to:

- consult with parents and carers of children with SEN and disabilities and young people with SEN and disabilities and,
- Work with education providers to agree how the capital can be best targeted.

Having identified social, emotional and mental health as the main priority area of need for investment, whilst acknowledging that there is limited capital funding available, the Local

Authority needs to ensure value for money by seeking to place its children in-borough wherever possible, thereby reducing placement costs and out-borough transport costs. Of paramount importance is the Local Authority's responsibility to ensure that any programme of capital investment helps to improve outcomes for those children and young people in its care.

## **6.0 The Consultation Proposal:**

To achieve these aims the Local Authority is consulting on a proposal to provide capital investment in both the primary and secondary school sectors in Halton to assist in the reduction of placements at independent providers, particularly out-borough, and associated transport costs, therefore, the proposal is:

- The Local Authority provides capital investment from the Department for Education for additional resource bases at existing schools within both the primary and secondary sector in Halton to support children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.
- The on-line response asks:
  - 1) Do you agree with the proposal to place £500,000 of capital investment over a 3 year period in the provision of additional resource bases at existing primary and secondary schools in Halton to support Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision in Halton?
  - 2) If you do not agree with the proposal, where do you feel the capital investment should be made?

## **7.0 Responding to the consultation**

If you wish to respond to the consultation please do so using the following link [www.halton.gov.uk/sen](http://www.halton.gov.uk/sen) by 5pm on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018. Any responses received after the deadline will be discounted.

You will not receive an individual response to any comment submitted, but following closure of the consultation the Local Authority will review the responses and formulate a short plan regarding how it intends making the capital investment provided under this central government funding. The plan will then be published by 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 on the Local Offer page: [Local Offer](#)