

Worcestershire County Council Special Education Needs and Disability Investment Plan 2018-21

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Contact: Robert Williams, Manager Universal Provision & Planning Manager 0-19

Provision Planning & Accommodation

Education & Skills

01905 844505

rjwilliams@worcestershire.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

In 2017 Worcestershire County Council undertook a strategic High Needs Commissioning Review to look at the way we commission high needs places and the numbers of children currently in the education system and those forecast to enter our schools. As part of that review the Council worked closely with partners, including local early years providers, schools and colleges and the health service. The strategic document produced was consulted on, including with parents and carers, before being approved in autumn 2017.

The next stage of the review is to now implement its recommendations. This investment plan covers elements of the implementation of the review in respect of the creation of new places or the development of existing accommodation to improve outcomes.

2. Vision and principles

Strategic Vision for Education in Worcestershire

Worcestershire County Council believes that all children should have the opportunity for the best possible education to allow them to fulfil their full potential. The County Council will work with all types of providers to ensure there is a sufficiency of good quality special education places in Worcestershire.

Core Principles

Where WCC identifies the need for additional places, the decision on which provider to commission will be based on the following clear core principles:

- Improve educational outcomes for all children and young people
- Improve the learning experience of children and young people
- Support good or outstanding provision
- Be sustainable in the long term
- Be cost effective / value for money

3. Links to other Council Strategic documents

[WCC's Corporate Plan "Shaping Worcestershire's Future"](#), has four key priorities to help guide the work of the Council over the next five years.

WCC are focused on improving outcomes for all children, young people and families in Worcestershire. Our ambition is to see more children and young people achieving their full potential in education and being fully prepared to live happy, healthy, independent and prosperous adult lives.

Worcestershire's Children and Young People's 2017-21 provides a framework for all agencies and organisations working with children, young people and families to make the necessary impact to improve lives (<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cypp>).

The plan supports the following CYPP priorities:

- Support children to have the best start in life and be ready for learning
- Provide access to a quality and appropriate education/learning experience for all
- Improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people

Worcestershire's High Needs Commissioning Review Plan 2018 – 2022 (link to follow)

[Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) 2017-21](#)

Worcestershire's School Organisation Plan 2018-23

4. WCC statutory duty for sufficiency of places

Worcestershire County Council has a duty (under the Education Act 1996) to ensure there are sufficient school places to accommodate the children and young people who reside in the county and to ensure these places are of good quality with sufficient capacity to promote parental choice and diversity.

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on LAs to secure educational provision for children and young people with special educational needs. Section 315 requires LAs to keep their arrangements for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision under review.

5. Demand for special school places in Worcestershire

As part of our forecasting duty the Council carries out an annual SEND sufficiency forecast using data from the school census in autumn and spring. Alongside information from colleagues in SEN Services and local information from schools, this data is used to plan provision throughout the county and identify need.

The Council will publish the 2019 sufficiency data as part of its review of the strategic plan for school organisation in autumn 2019. This will be presented to Cabinet for approval in December 2019. The data contained will be monitored and updated annually and will provide the key evidence that will support this investment plan.

The High Needs Commissioning Review used previous sufficiency reports to identify trends going forward. One of the key recommendations was to increase the number of school aged places in Worcestershire special schools. This recommendation continues to form the basis for our investment going forward.

6. Commissioning new special school places

Following completion of the review the Council invited all special schools in Worcestershire to identify projects that might allow them to increase capacity. This invitation was kept as open as possible as the Council wished to examine all potential options.

This process has now been completed and some projects from within this commissioning cycle will now be progressed. The criteria used to assess the projects were in line with the core principles identified in section 2 above.

7. Capital funding

Worcestershire receives capital funding from the DfE to support its work with schools. This includes:

- Basic Need (For increasing places at any tax funded schools)
- Capital Maintenance (For LA maintained schools only)

In the period 2018-21 Worcestershire will also receive £1,843,105 (£614,349 per annum) from the Special Provision Fund providing we meet certain criteria (This includes the additional £252,480 announced as a top up in May 2018 and the £504,960 announced as a top up in December 2018).

Pressure on funding is extremely high with rising demographic numbers in middle and high schools, as well as in special schools.

8. SEND investment plan 2018-21

See investment plan below.

SEND Investment Plan 2018-21

2018-19

School	Project	Outcome	LA Investment	Next stage
Rigby Hall	Complex needs centre	Creation of 25 new places	£367,896	Approved and starting implementation. Completion due September 2019.
Fort Royal	Creation of early years hub	Potential for 60 new places	Support to develop option	Work with the school to develop this option and assess viability
Pitcheroak	Early Years (KS1) and work experience facility	Potential for 10 new places	Support to develop option	Work with the school to develop this option and assess viability
Advance MAT	Potential school expansion	Potential for 60 new places	Support to develop option	The Council is continuing to explore these proposals with the School/ Trust to develop this option and assess viability.

2019-20

School	Project	Outcome	LA Investment	Next stage
Pitcheroak	Early Years (KS1) and work experience facility	Creation of 8 new places	£297,945	Approved following feasibility assessment and starting implementation

2020-21

Whilst the Council does not have firm proposals for this year, it is expected that the following schemes will be developed in 2019-20 and 2020-21 and progress to implementation.

School	Project	Outcome	LA Investment	Next stage
N/A	Special resource bases/units at mainstream schools	Creation of new places	Examine options for specialist resources bases in main stream schools to enable more children to stay in mainstream	The Council will explore this proposal with schools to develop and assess the viability, which will include forming a project group and full consultation.

The Council will work directly with schools to ensure the projects in receipt of funding are delivered and suitable for the intended provision. All projects outlined above have been, or will be, subject to feasibility assessments to specify requirements for the building and provision thereby confirming funding requirements.

The Local Authority is working through a provision planning process to further inform how the additional funding will be used. This includes analysis of needs (trends and projections), current provision, school capacity across the County, financial data, and consultation.

Development of options will be subject to:

- a) a full feasibility assessment and specification of requirements for capital works to finalise agreements for funding between the Council and the schools, and
- b) a business case demonstrating the proposal is financially justifiable in terms of funding and value for money.

The Council and schools will work collaboratively to develop the provision outlined above, where feasible.

9. Monitoring effectiveness of plan

The plan will be monitored and updated as appropriate but at least annually and republished in March each year. Further information about options identified for the additional funding and any further consultation will be published via an update to this Plan on Worcestershire County Council's Local Offer page.

The plan will be monitored against the following criteria:

- Creation of sufficiency of special school places to meet anticipated demand
- Number of new places created in good or outstanding special schools
- New places created in a timely manner
- Value for money of new places created.