

Future arrangements for the provision of Education and Inclusion Services

Report of the Chief Officer for Children's Services

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation:

- A) that Cabinet note the consultation and engagement process that has taken place over the past 15 months.
- B) that following expiry or termination of the existing service contracts with Babcock Learning and Development Partnership LLP the Education and Inclusion Services are brought into direct delivery by the Council, through the Education and Learning teams.
- C) that subject to Recommendation B being agreed, the County Treasurer, County Solicitor, and Head of Digital Transformation & Business Support (in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead member) be authorised to:
 - 1. determine the Council's preferred option for the future of the LLP after the existing service contract for Learner Services has come to an end;
 - 2. enter into discussions with Babcock Education Holdings Ltd for the purposes of agreeing the future of the LLP;
 - 3. execute all legal and financial agreements necessary to effect any decisions or agreements reached with regard to the future of the LLP.
- D) that, subject to Recommendations B and C being agreed, and in the event that the LLP is wound up or otherwise ceases to provide the traded services, that the Chief Officer for Children's Services (in consultation with the County Treasurer, County Solicitor, Head of Digital Transformation & Business Support, Head of Education & Learning, the lead member for Children's Services and the Leader of the Council) be authorised to consider the future of appropriate traded services in accordance with the commitment provided at paragraph 3.17 below.

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report explains the background and process which has taken place over the past 15 months to ensure the effective delivery of a significant number of the Local Authority's statutory duties in relation to Education when the current contract with Babcock LDP expires.

- 1.2. The current contract delivered by Babcock LDP has worked well and is valued. Moving forward we need to prioritise the integration of SEND services so that we can continue to improve our ability to meet the needs of children and their families.
- 1.3. The recommendations support a fully integrated SEND Service while also securing safe delivery of the remaining statutory duties and services which are important to the inclusive education of pupils in schools.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 In 2012, after thorough consultation with staff and stakeholders and following a rigorous options appraisal, Devon County Council (DCC) took the decision to commission out its statutory Education and Inclusion Services. The delivery model chosen was a joint venture with Babcock Training Ltd (now Babcock Educational Holdings Ltd). A new partnership, Babcock Learning and Development Partnership LLP (LLP), was formed between Babcock and DCC and a service contract was put in place for a maximum of ten years. This contract was due to expire on 31st March 2022, but due to the delays caused by the pandemic in August 2020, DCC Cabinet approved an extension to the existing contract for a period of up to 12 months, to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The LLP does not automatically end with the expiry of the service contract. A separate decision is therefore required in relation to its future, see paragraph 3.16 below.
- 2.2 At the time of the original decision, the policy framework for traded services<sup>1</sup> to schools linked to academisation indicated that Local Authority duties would decrease and that many services would move into a fully traded model within the period of the contract. The contract has been very well delivered by Babcock but the impact of this national policy has not been realised and whilst there is a significant traded element, additional to the services within the Education & Inclusion Services contract, this is not to the proportion originally expected. The number of statutory duties sitting with the Local Authority has remained and has in some areas been extended.
- 2.3 In 2014 significant changes were made to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations relating to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabled children and young people. New statutory guidance was introduced (the SEND Code of Practice 2014) including guidance to ensure close co-operation between education, health and social care; this was a change from the previous regulation which focused entirely on education.
- 2.4 A DCC led Project Board including school and governor representation has been undertaking work on the future service design and the delivery model options for the Education and Inclusion service. The re-commissioning work began in summer 2019 with consultation, engagement and co-design sessions with parents and schools. Throughout the engagement and as supported again in the recent public consultation, the need to integrate

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<sup>1</sup> these are services bought by schools directly from Babcock LDP but outside of the DCC contract.

services for SEND is the strongest message received. This message is supported by a wide range of stakeholders.

- 2.5 This report lays out in more detail the strategic direction for the services under consideration and how they work alongside the wider Council and partnership. It also reflects on the current market position and how this impacts the market options available. A detailed business case has been developed and shared with leadership and Cabinet at previous meetings. A finance and resources summary is also attached as a separate part 2 paper. Three sessions have also been held with the Children's Standing Overview Group and other invited members to allow consideration of the options appraisal and the outcome of the public consultation, issues raised by Members were taken into account for the future recommendations.
- 2.6 The recommendations made in this paper reflect the work undertaken over the past 15 months and will ensure effective delivery of our statutory duties and other services that schools value when the current contract expires. It will also prioritise the integration of SEND services in order to better meet the needs of children and their families.

### **3. Proposal**

#### Future Service Delivery

- 3.1 Devon has an ambitious partnership vision for all children. The services covered within this paper (as listed in 3.9 and 3.10 below) are significant for the delivery of a wide range of statutory duties which the Local Authority holds to safeguard all children and ensure that they can access high quality inclusive education.
- 3.2 These services impact on some of the most vulnerable children, improving life chances and achieving our strategic priority of inclusion, through high quality SEND and other support services.
- 3.3 There is a strong partnership wide commitment to develop a truly transformative SEND service where Education, Health and Care work as one team. Work to transform the SEND offer in Devon has been underway since Spring 2020.
- 3.4 The purpose of the [SEND transformation programme](#) is "to improve parents' and young people's lived experience of SEN support in Devon by designing and implementing an integrated service that works together, and with families, to ensure young people receive the right support at the right time." This work sits as part of our wider SEND improvement plan.
- 3.5 Parents have told us we need to meet the needs of children with SEND earlier and better and improve access to and coordination of support. In our design work with parents and schools we have also focused on specific groups of children, evaluating ways to improve children's lived experience and impact on their long-term outcomes by changing how we work to meet needs earlier, particularly improving capacity to meet speech and communication, autism and social and emotional needs.

- 3.6 We have excellent inclusion opportunities for children with SEND in Devon, with 57% (3720) of statutory school age children accessing mainstream education (14% above the national average). This is a continual challenge to achieve however, with the needs of children becoming more complex and standards rising. The transformation programme will support continuation of this performance, particularly in the light of the long-term impact of the COVID pandemic on a generation of children.
- 3.7 Our SEND transformation vision is in line with the priorities of our Children and Young People's Plan and our [SEND strategy](#), where we set out our commitment to improving life chances, ensuring all children and young people in Devon have the right to achieve their potential with opportunities to thrive.
- 3.8 Devon is likely to have a Local Area SEND inspection in 2021. Our partnership will need to demonstrate progress against the SEND Reforms 2014 and the delivery of the Code of Practice. Our assessment of progress to date against the wider outcomes of SEND and the delivery of the Written Statement of Action shows good progress with wide reaching actions. However, impact for children and families is not yet secure and there are several areas which have not seen the improvement needed. Without the transformation of SEND delivery we may not realise the full potential of this opportunity.
- 3.9 There is evidence that to deliver the full integration described above the SEND services currently within the contract would need to be brought into the direct delivery of the council. These services are:
- Education Psychology
  - Early Years support & advice
  - Children Missing Education
  - Physical & Sensory Support
  - Social, Emotional & Mental Health
  - Communication & Interaction
  - Multi-sensory impairment (currently under a separate contract with Babcock LDP)
- 3.10 Despite the benefits identified, bringing in these services creates a knock-on consequence for the viability of a service contract to deliver the remaining services and maintain vital support for schools and children and which include:
- Elective Home Education support and monitoring (EHE)
  - Ethnic Minority, Travel and English as an additional language
  - Education Welfare Service
  - Teaching, Curriculum & Learning Advisory Support
  - Governance, School Improvement and Quality Assurance
  - Education Safeguarding
- 3.11 Our assessment following the market analysis is that, with fewer services being offered as part of the contract, appetite for the remaining services is very low and is limited to one main national provider and one small local

collaboration. Engagement has given a clear view that the incumbent provider would be unlikely to bid in this scenario. The one national provider expressing an interest has indicated they would need to carry out very careful scrutiny and financial assessment prior to bidding and they would include in this assessment the commercial viability of opportunities for economies of scale to trade services over borders.

- 3.12 In summary, our assessment of the market interest is that it is unlikely there are providers in a position to deliver the remaining services, should the SEND services be brought into direct delivery.
- 3.13 There are additional opportunities if remaining services are brought into direct delivery. For example, alignment of Education Welfare (currently in the contract) to the Inclusion Services and Early Help teams (within DCC) could offer good efficiency and effectiveness of outcomes. The remaining services would then be Educational Safeguarding, Governor support and School Improvement. There is a potential opportunity for School Improvement to be part of the sector led peer support landscape.
- 3.14 As explained above, consideration of the strategic benefits that would be realised through SEND integration and transformation alongside the potential market conditions for those services not included has determined the Recommendation B to Cabinet.

#### Future of the LLP

- 3.15 The LLP was not set up to automatically end with the service contract. As well as delivering DCC's service contract, it also provides the traded services directly to schools. A separate Corporate Governance Group comprised of the County Treasurer, County Solicitor, and Head of Digital Transformation & Business Support has been set up to consider the future of the LLP. More particularly, the remit of the Corporate Governance Group is to review DCC's options in relation to the future of the LLP and its traded services from a corporate perspective including any liabilities and costs associated with those options and the procedure and timings for each option. In brief, the 3 available options for the LLP are 1) the LLP remains 'as is' to deliver the traded services, 2) DCC sells its interest in the LLP to Babcock or a third party or 3) the LLP is wound up. It is important to stress that DCC will need to explore these options with Babcock Education Holdings Ltd with the aim of agreeing a joint way forward.
- 3.16 If Cabinet approve Recommendation B, they are also asked to approve Recommendations C and D. The Council will need to explore the above-mentioned LLP options with Babcock Education Holdings Ltd and agree a way forward and implement it.
- 3.17 Furthermore, in the event that the LLP is wound up or otherwise ceases to provide the traded services, the Council will need to determine how the traded services will continue to be provided. These services still provide valuable support directly to schools and would have a significant impact on their ability to deliver and support learners if they were lost. Our commitment to schools in any new arrangements for the Education and Inclusion Services will ensure the traded services are not impacted.

## 4. Options/Alternatives

- 4.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken. It considered the way that the services within the current contract work together and how they are connected to other services outside the contract to provide the whole system of support to schools, children, young people and their families.
- 4.2 The SEND transformation work is a priority for the council and there is evidence that bringing the SEND services into direct delivery by DCC is the best way of delivering an integrated SEND service that works together, and with families, to ensure that young people receive the right support at the right time. This view was supported by the consultation work undertaken (see section 5) and so is a key driver for determining the delivery options.
- 4.3 The current Education and Inclusion services work in an integrated way and to separate the SEND services from the rest would have resulted in an impact in the progress made to improve delivery across the period of the previous contract. This strategic context in addition to the market context resulted in the options appraisal below.
- 4.4 Significant market engagement has been undertaken to fully explore market appetite and a full report has been completed on this. Whilst there was some initial interest from a range of providers in the market, on further investigation and engagement it transpired that, when considering delivery of all services, this was limited to just two potential providers.
- 4.5 It was clear that if the SEND services (including Early Years) were delivered directly by DCC to achieve the benefits outlined above, the market interest to deliver the remaining school improvement, safeguarding and quality services reduced significantly.
- 4.6 Further engagement was therefore undertaken with providers to explore the range of delivery options for the remaining services, direct delivery options from DCC were also considered (as described in section 5).
  - The options of an employee led, alliance, partnership vehicle or community interest company model were considered, there were limited providers showing an interest and most of those that did express an interest did not currently have the capability or capacity to deliver the services as required.
  - The final option considered and recommended, is to bring all remaining services into direct delivery through the Education and Learning teams alongside the SEND services. This delivers against the strategic priorities as outlined in this paper. This option also enables continued integrated delivery of all the Education and Inclusions services and offers the opportunity, in the future, to develop the commissioning of some school improvement services through a peer to peer model. If necessary, it would also provide a vehicle for appropriate traded elements of the remaining services to be delivered through a branded delivery model, once the future of the LLP has been determined.

4.7 The above options and their impact on delivery have been reviewed against the agreed objectives which are laid out in the following documents

- Improve outcomes for Children and Young People as set out in our [Children and Young People's Plan](#) and our [SEND Strategy](#).
- Reflect the findings of the SEND review in December 2018 and build on the priorities identified in our [Written Statement of Action](#) and the recommendations of the [SEND transformation programme](#).
- Be efficient.
- Be sustainable.
- Be flexible.

## 5. Consultations

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with schools through a design workshop, two surveys and 3 consultation events held virtually. The main schools' consultation took place as part of the Schools Funding Consultation in October.
- 5.2 The feedback received through the Schools Funding Consultation, alongside previous schools' engagement, informed the options appraisal. Although most school respondents expressed "no preference" to commissioned or in-house delivery of services, where a preference was expressed, most responses indicated they felt there was a benefit on bringing the service in-house.
- 5.3 Feedback from families and other stakeholders has also been used to inform the process. This has included previous engagement during 2017 with families regarding community health and wellbeing services, sensory service review engagement workshops during 2018/2019 and short breaks co-design and workshops during 2019/20, as well as feedback from families during meetings with DCC Childrens' Services senior leaders arranged by Parent Carer Forum Devon in Summer 2020.
- 5.4 Following this consultation with schools and with families, a public consultation was carried out through the 'Have Your Say' website from 5/11/20 to 01/12/2020. This was also advertised through the SEND newsletter and the SEND alerts system as well as other partner communication flows.
- 5.5 This November 2020 public consultation asked the following:
- "The services being considered for direct delivery by DCC are Educational Psychologists (EP), Children Missing Education (CME) and Early Years, with the remaining services to continue to be delivered through a tendered contract(s). Do you agree this would be the best way to deliver these services in the future? "
- 5.6 A total of 115 online responses were received; some of these responses represented a group response and other forums (for example schools) had already fed back earlier in the process. Additional representation was received from the NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group, who noted and supported the benefits in relation to the services responding earlier to families need without the need for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

- 5.7 Of the online responses received, 62 said yes, 46 said no, and 7 had no view. An appetite for increased service provision delivered by the Local Authority was evident in six of the 'no' responses, with a number of the "yes" responses also commenting that more services could be considered for direct delivery.
- 5.8 Two further questions asked for feedback in relation to whether the services could be delivered differently to the proposal. Feedback themes from the consultation were around the importance of integrated and multi-agency working, either within a Local Authority or a commissioned service delivery model.
- 5.9 The extensive information fed back through the public consultation was used to further inform the options appraisal.
- 5.10 As part of market engagement, the opportunity for providers to feedback was also offered via the portal or in writing.
- 5.11 Children's Scrutiny have also fed back their view and provided challenge at the following meetings:
- Children's Scrutiny Committee – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020.  
 Children's Scrutiny Master Class – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, 9.30 – 11 am.  
 Children's Standing Overview Group – 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021, 12 pm – 1 pm.  
 Children's Standing Overview Group – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 10.30 – 12.30 pm.
- A summary of Scrutiny members' discussions is included at Appendix A.
- 5.12 The Schools Forum have been kept updated throughout the project by their steering group representatives and at Devon Education Forum and School Funding Group meetings.
- 5.13 Over the past 15 months the DCC senior managers accountable for each of the service areas have also been consulted, and their views have been taken into account alongside those of other stakeholders as part of the options appraisal.

## **6. Financial Considerations**

- 6.1 If approved, Recommendation B would see a significant number of staff becoming DCC employees. An initial financial analysis has been undertaken to inform decisions around cost and risk. A summary is provided below but a detailed finance paper including staffing numbers and delivery costs is included as a separate part 2 paper.
- 6.2 Based on the initial calculations, it is estimated that hosting the direct delivery services (excluding traded elements) should not see any additional costs to the Authority over and above the current contract costs (plus inflation to the time of implementation). Due to the market condition, current trading conditions and as the contract value has not increased since 2012 any retender of the services in their current format is very likely to see increased costs.
- 6.3 The current contract commissioned by DCC has a value of £8.8 million pounds per annum. Direct delivery costs estimates have been calculated which take into account:



- Current staffing levels within the contract and estimated staffing costs.
  - IT annual charges.
  - Premises costs.
  - Business, Customer Relations, Finance, Human Resources and Legal Support.
  - Insurance.
- 6.4 There are currently some costs which cannot be quantified, for example possible pension costs for any staff not already on the Local Government Pension Scheme. Work will continue to refine these as more detailed information becomes available.
- 6.5 There is a separate, aligned, contract in place with Babcock which delivers support for children with multi- sensory impairment. This contract has been considered alongside the other SEND Services.
- 6.6 Should the decision be made to go ahead with bringing these services into direct delivery of the Council, resources from several corporate teams will be needed to deliver the transfer of staff to DCC. Initial estimates of the resources needed are being developed.
- 6.7 Organisational learning from other insourcing projects, particularly Public Health Nursing, will continue to be taken into account in planning the direct delivery exercise. Corporate teams will be stakeholders in both project planning and project delivery. The work required will be planned well ahead of transfer. DCC and the current provider already share the same database systems and reporting so this should simplify the process of bringing in the additional teams.

## **6.8 Pension Considerations**

The pension fund actuary will determine if any liability or surplus exists in respect of Babcock's funding position within the Devon Pension Fund at the date that the agreement ceases. Any liability or surplus identified will not be crystallised, and therefore an immediate payment (in the event of a liability) or income receipt (in the event of a surplus) will not be required; instead, the employer pension contribution rate of Devon County Council, as the new service provider, will be revised to incorporate any liability or surplus. At the 2019 actuarial valuation, Babcock was assessed to have a funding level of 100%.

Any employee transferring from Babcock to Devon County Council who is already a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) will remain in the LGPS. Any employee who is not currently in the LGPS will be offered the opportunity to join the LGPS upon commencing employment with Devon County Council. Devon County Council will be responsible for paying the employer pension contributions for LGPS members from the date that the agreement ceases. The costs of employer pension contributions for existing and new members of the LGPS will be covered via a revision to Devon County Council's employer pension contribution rate.

Babcock will be discharged from any future obligations to the Devon Pension Fund from the date that the agreement ceases.

## **7. Legal Considerations**

- 7.1 The lawful implications/consequences of the proposals/recommendations/proposed course of action have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report and the recommendations set out above.
- 7.2 The staff directly involved in the delivery of services to DCC under the services contracts would be eligible for transfer to DCC under TUPE regulations. The staff involved in the delivery of the traded services may also be eligible to transfer to DCC under the TUPE regulations if the LLP stops providing the traded services and these are provided by DCC.

## **8. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)**

The recommendations made are not expected to have any measurable environmental impacts.

## **9. Equality Considerations**

An Impact Assessment has been prepared and is published on the DCC website. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published/>

## **10. Risk Management Considerations**

- 10.1 A risk register is in place for the project and risks have been analysed. The most significant risks identified from a service and an organisational perspective are described below.
- 10.2 Failure to deliver the Local Authority's statutory responsibilities – failure to agree a way forward beyond the current contract would put continuity of a significant number of statutory duties at risk. The existing contract cannot be extended further in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. If approval for the recommendations is granted today the current project governance will be reviewed and revised, with a plan and a project team being put in place including the stakeholders and resources needed to ensure continuity of services at the end of the current contract.
- 10.3 Unsuccessful Tender - should the above recommendations not be approved, there is a high risk that there would not be a successful bid as an outcome of the tender process. Market engagement has tested potential interest in the services both on a macro and micro level. As fewer services are offered together, the risk of an unsuccessful tender increases (impacting on both outcomes for children and the financial risks).
- 10.4 Project resource capacity - the project remains a high priority for the Local Authority, with escalation procedure should needs require due to conflicting priorities.
- 10.5 Impact on staffing, future retention of key staff and impact on service delivery – there is a risk that changes could cause staff working for the current provider to feel unsettled and seek alternative employment. This is being mitigated through

ongoing dialogue with the incumbent provider to ensure engagement as appropriate throughout, with clear communications managed via incumbent provider to staff groups. The future design of services will aim to encourage retention and sustainability of staffing in the future.

## **11. Public Health Impact**

- 11.1 The proposals outlined in this report are expected to have an overall positive effect on public health as well as on individual children and their families. The proposals support our partnership vision across education, health and social care for all children to have the best start in life and to improve their life chances, ensuring that they are able to achieve their potential and have opportunities to thrive.
- 11.2 Health elements are also picked up in the impact assessment.

## **12. Conclusions**

- 12.1 In conclusion, as a result of the extensive analysis and consultation work carried out over the last 15 months and given the findings of the market engagement work and the risk identified of there not being a competitive provider market for the remaining services, it is recommended that all of the Education and Inclusion services currently provided by Babcock LDP and as described in this document are brought in for direct delivery by DCC through the Education and Learning teams. This is the best option to successfully transform SEND for children and families.
- 12.2 If these recommendations are agreed, the current project team will be repurposed to include resources from corporate teams including HR, ICT and Estates. Work will then go ahead to fully define and plan the activities needed to bring these services into direct delivery by DCC at or before the end of the current contract extension period.

Chief Officer for Children's Services Melissa Caslake

Electoral Divisions: All

Cabinet Member for Education: Councillor James McInnes

Head of Education and Learning: Dawn Stabb

### **Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers**

Contact for Enquiries: Dawn Stabb, Head of Education and Learning

| <b>Background Paper</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>File Reference</b>                                                                               |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Impact assessment       |             | <a href="https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published/">https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published/</a> |

## Appendix A

### Education and Inclusion consideration by the Children's Scrutiny Committee Standing Overview Group in 2021

Scrutiny welcomes the open and transparent way in which Children's Services has invited and involved Scrutiny Members in the candid consideration of future options for Education and Inclusion. This year the Children's Standing Overview Group has met twice on the 21st January and on the 16th February to consider this issue in detail.

To date this has not been reported to Committee due to time restrictions, however Members have expressed support for the plans. This is an example of excellent pre-decision Scrutiny and of Councillors being involved early in the consideration of service change including confidential information to support the conversation. The turnout for both meetings was high with the majority of the Committee attending both meetings. Members endorsed the direction of the recommendations.

Extracts from the reports for each meeting are detailed below:

#### **Report of the Children's Special Standing Overview Group 21st January 2021**

Dawn Stabb (Head of Education & Learning), Kate Mulford (Commissioning Manager – Children's Services), Andrew Simkins (Procurement Category Manager) presented on the recommissioning of Education and Inclusion Services.

The presentation re-capped previous information shared with members, the outcomes of the public consultation, an overview of the SEND Transformation plan, financial information on the different option 'bundles' and the outcomes of market engagement.

The information shared was on a confidential basis with members due to the information being market sensitive and the legal process of tendering services.

After the presentation, there was an opportunity for members to raise any questions about the presentation with officers.

Member discussion topics:

- Members asked officers about the public consultation and the types of people engaged in the consultation.
- Members asked about alternative delivery models in the procurement process rather than just public or private providers. Officers explained options were being explored and would become clearer once options were finalised.
- Members discussed the timeliness of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and officers explained that by providing an inclusive wrap around service, the number of EHCPs would decrease and timeliness would improve.
- Members discussed the impact of moving services in house and the rationale of the original contract of services and the approach being taken now.
- Members asked about other services which were not included in the discussion. Officers highlighted that the proposals reflected improving outcomes and providing a better service. Officers and the Cabinet Member

highlighted 'bundles' or options are open for discussion and no decision had been made on the final proposals.

- Members discussed professional development and training of the local workforce and working with local education providers.

*Actions:*

1. *Future briefing note or agenda item focusing on professional development of local staff and acknowledging the local workforce of professionals.*

Officers outlined the next steps of the process to Members and highlighted their focus on ensuring Members are informed of the decisions.

### **Report of the Children's Scrutiny Standing Overview Group – 16th February 2021**

Melissa Caslake (Chief Officer for Children's Services), Dawn Stabb (Head of Education & Learning) and Fiona Fleming (Head of Commissioning – Children's) presented on the recommissioning of Education and Inclusion Services.

The presentation re-capped previous information shared with Members and the recommissioning journey so far. The presentation covered the context of the decisions being made, the current contract, SEND Transformation, the current options for services, and the financial implications of these options.

The information shared was on a confidential basis with Members due to the information being commercially sensitive.

Officers stressed the justification behind the recommissioning of services to work together with the SEND Transformation project to create a better wrap around service that avoids high cost interventions at a later stage. Members praised the reasoning behind the recommissioning of services and the possibility of creating a better service for Children and Families.

After the presentation, there was an opportunity for Members to raise any questions about the presentation with officers.

Member discussion topics:

- Members asked officers about when scrutiny will be able to see the improvements made from the recommissioning of services. Officers responded that the current timetable to integrate services is 18 months to 2 years.
- Members asked officers about the financial implications of the decisions. Officers and the Cabinet Member confirmed that the recommissioning of services is not a cost saving exercise but focussed on better outcomes for children and families while transforming how services work.
- Members questioned officers on the implications on staff and management staff in the event of services moving to the County Council. Officers responded that staff will TUPE across to the County Council and they already work closely with staff in the current arrangements but will continue to work closely with staff in the integration of services.
- Members asked officers about the proposed SEND 'Hub' of wrap around services. Officers responded that the 'Hub' is still in the design phase but would be centred on local areas.

Officers outlined the next steps of the process to Members to ensure Members will be involved in the process.

The full reports for each Standing Overview Group will be reported to the Children's Scrutiny Committee Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> March.