### Summary:

This report is to provide the committee with an update on activity since its last consideration in September of the SEND Continuous Improvement Agenda and to provide the Committee with the final version of the SEND Improvement Plan which has now been published on the Local Offer.

### Recommendation(s):

1. The Committee notes the progress to date.
2. The Committee notes the final version of the Improvement Plan
3. The Committee awaits receipt of the first performance framework against this improvement plan in January 2020.

### Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The report is for the committee’s information and updated only at this time.

### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

(including any Risk Implications)

Not applicable

### What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs
Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

In December 2018 the Government announced, “Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are set to benefit from an extra £350 million funding to provide specialist support and tailored facilities, helping those with complex needs to succeed.”

The Local Government Association (LGA) states “There is simply not enough money to keep up with demand, leaving many councils unable to meet their statutory duties and meaning children with high needs or disabilities could miss out on mainstream education.”

The High Needs Budget in 2018/19 overspent by £2.3m. This is after taking into account the additional £562k awarded in December 2018 as part of Sefton’s share of the £350m two-year additional funding.

Annual expenditure has risen by £4.5m between 2014/15 and 2018/19 an increase of 17.7%, whereas annual High Needs funding has only increased by £2.392m (9.4%) across the same period, this includes taking inter-DSG block funding transfers into account.

Legal Implications:

The Children and Families Act (2014) places a statutory duty on local authorities, education providers, CCGs and other NHS organisations to provide support for children and young people with SEN or disabilities aged 0-25. In doing these local authorities, NHS England and their partner CCGs must make arrangements for agreeing the education, health and social care provision reasonably required by local children and young people with SEN or disabilities.

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Ensure a focused response on providing improved outcomes for the children, young people with SEND and their families.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The Improvement Plan responding to the
revisit and the subsequent activity will need to build the confidence of the communities that the Council and its Health partners are delivering on their commitments.

**Commission, broker and provide core services:**
A key pillar of the Improvement Plan is the development and delivery of a Joint Commissioning Strategy.

**Place – leadership and influencer:**
The Council will work with partners, in particular Health, to work towards common goals in relation to the delivery of the Action Plan. The Council has a key role in holding the whole system to account on this matter and will ensure an evidence-based plan is delivered against.

**Drivers of change and reform:** The Council will work with partners, in particular Health, to make change happen to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

**Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:** Not Applicable

**Greater income for social investment:** Not Applicable

**Cleaner Greener:** Not Applicable

---

**What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

(A) **Internal Consultations**

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD5841/19) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4075/19) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Officers of all parties will ensure that all members of the SEND workforce are aware of the content of the Improvement Plan, their role in delivering the change and progress against plan.

(B) **External Consultations**

The Council has engaged and is actively working with the CCG and other Health partners on this matter. This engagement is being led by Interim Director of Children’s Services.

It is important to note that as operational changes and commissioning intentions are developed parents and carers will be engaged in the process. Families will be kept fully informed of developing and planned changes as well as progress against the Improvement Plan.

---

**Implementation Date for the Decision**
Immediately following the Committee meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Officer:</th>
<th>Vicky Buchanan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Number:</td>
<td>01519343126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vicky.buchanan@sefton.gov.uk">vicky.buchanan@sefton.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendices:

A. Published Improvement Plan.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. **Introduction**

1.1 On September 24th 2019 this Committee received a report on Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). The report outlined that as a result of the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection in the joint local area SEND revisit that took place between 15th to 17th April 2019, and the decision of the Department of Education to issue the Council with an Improvement Notice on the 14th June 2019 (published on 25th July), the SEND Partnership had produced an Improvement Plan which was subject to agreement by the Department for Education (DfE).

1.2 The Improvement Plan has been agreed by the DfE and has been published on the Local Offer and is attached for information at Annex A.

1.3 Members will recall that it was agreed at the Overview & Scrutiny (Children’s Services and Safeguarding) September meeting to monitor progress against the plan on a quarterly basis commencing in January 2020. The improvement notice will remain in place for a minimum of 18 months.

2. **SEND Continuous Improvement recent activity:**

2.1 The Improvement Plan has been received and approved by the SEND Continuous Improvement Board (SEND CIB) at their last meeting, held on the 22nd October.

2.1 Members will recall that the SEND CIB includes 5 subgroups:
2.3 The membership of SENDCIB now includes representatives of Parent Carer Forum (there are 3 Parent Carer Forum representatives on the board), head teacher representatives from Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Special education and advisors from the DfE and NHS England. Given the scope of the improvements required each quarter the SENDCIB will undertake a deep dive into one of the following areas:

- Performance Management and Assessment & Provision
- Joint Commissioning
- Co-production, Communication and Engagement

2.4 The Performance Management Framework approach has been agreed by the board at their meeting on the 10th September 2019 and performance monitoring against this has now commenced. The Committee will receive its first report from this at its meeting in January 2020. Following a request from the Parent Carers attending SENDCIB the Council performance lead has attended the October Sefton Parent Carer Forum to ensure a shared understanding and agreement of the approach to performance tracking.

2.5 The Joint Commissioning Sub Group has developed a draft SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for SEND and Commissioning Approach which have been presented to the SENDCIB and approved for progression into the co-production phase. The Co-production Sub Group will now design an engagement and communications plan around this and begin work on the draft. A final draft is expected to be presented to the SEND CIB at their January meeting.

2.6 The SEND CIB have agreed to the regular updates on the Local Offer ensure all Children, Young People, their parents and Carers, professionals and Stakeholders are fully aware of the developments and improvements that are happening in the area of SEND.
2.7 Members will note from appendix A that work is well underway on the delivery of the plan.

2.8 All partners have taken immediate action to improve current operational performance in meeting the 20-week statutory timescale to produce Education, Health and Care Plans. Recovery Plans are in place. To ensure improvement going forward a number of operational changes have been made, the Council has:

- agreed temporary funding for two additional Case Workers and a senior case worker
- recruitment to all vacant posts is being actively progressed
- seconded an experienced Head Teacher from the Ofsted rated Outstanding Rowan Special School on a full time basis to assure the improvements that are being put in place from an education perspective and that the progress made to date is sustained
- offered a number of secondment opportunities to SENCOs to progress EHCP reviews
- has developed a tracker that monitors all outstanding and new requests for assessment, decisions to assess, production of draft plans, consultation with key stakeholders and parents and issue of final plans and
- organised training for the SEND workforce from the National Association of Special Educational Needs (NASEN) which was delivered in September 2019 on writing EHCP outcomes.

2.9 The CCGs have:

- agreed funding for two additional temporary Speech and Language Therapists (commence in September/October 2019) plus recruitment of 1 permanent speech therapist (commence in September/October 2019)
- created a new performance dashboard and reporting structure so that all services can be more effectively monitored
- changed booking systems so that in the future families should not experience multiple appointment cancellations to see a paediatrician
- implemented clinical supervision implemented for the DCO in full

2.10 The Plan also reflects that the following areas have moved into a state of business as usual in recognition that although significant progress has already been made continual furtherment of this will be needed:

- Monitoring of Key Stage 2 outcomes for our Children and Young People with SEND against national indicators.
- Monitoring of neurodevelopmental diagnostic pathways implementation and continuous improvement to ensure outcomes are being met.
- Reduction in Paediatric waiting times for Health services, particularly SALT.

3. Conclusion
This report demonstrates the progress made in the period proceeding formal overview and scrutiny commences as per the request made to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s and Safeguarding) to monitor progress against the Improvement Plan on a quarterly basis commencing in January 2020.