

**Meeting date:** 12 July 2022  
**Report to:** Solihull School Forum  
**Subject/report title:** Draft Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategy  
**Report from:** Director of Children's Services  
**Report author/lead contact officer:** Ann Pearson – Team Leader School Place Planning



---

**Schools affected:**

All Schools

**Type of Report** For Forum to express view to the Local authority  
**Forum Voting** Not a voting matter - for information item  
**Public/private report:** Public

---

**1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 To share with Forum the draft Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategy and seek feedback on the draft Strategy before wider consultation in the Autumn Term.

**2. Decision(s) recommended**

2.1 To seek the views of Forum on the draft Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategy and in particular, to understand if the identified actions and priorities within the document are appropriate.

**3. Matters for Consideration**

- 3.1 In September 2021, a discussion paper 'Alternative Provision in Solihull' was shared with schools and providers seeking views on the current landscape of alternative provision in Solihull. This draft strategy seeks to build on that initial work and provide an outline for the next steps in creating a more cohesive alternative provision system.
- 3.2 The Government's recently published 'Green Paper' - The SEND Review, sets out the Government's proposals for a system that offers children and young people the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support, in the right place, and at the right time, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives. The paper seeks to establish a new national SEND and alternative provision system setting nationally consistent standards.

- 3.3 The 'Green Paper' recognises that at their best, alternative provision schools are experts in supporting children and young people whose behaviour or other needs can present a barrier to learning, but, it also identified that too often the role of alternative provision is unclear, and it is used too late or in a way that is not best focused on children's needs.
- 3.4 This draft Alternative Provision document provides a basis to work with schools and parents on what is required from an alternative provision commissioning system in Solihull to ensure that all children have access to high quality, suitable full-time education. It identifies what is currently available in Solihull, the challenges and existing gaps in provisions, services and systems. A number of key actions have been identified to form the basis of wider consultation that will be used to underpin a redesign of the system, provide sufficient capacity and bring about clarity, coherence and flexibility in provisions and approach.

#### **4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?**

- 4.1 The draft Strategy outlines a range of priorities for the development of provision, services and systems to deliver Alternative Provision in Solihull.
- 4.2 Any specific proposals that come forward as a result of the proposed commissioning strategy will require full options appraisal and consultation with schools, parents and the wider education community.

#### **5. Reasons for recommending preferred option**

- 5.1 The LA must ensure that it has, and alternative provisions, systems, services, and funding mechanisms which will enable it to discharge its statutory responsibilities and do the right thing for children and to ensure that where possible, children can be supported to receive their education through regular attendance at school. Where this is not possible, and/or they require access to alternative provision, there must be sufficient suitable and local places available that can be accessed by schools and the Local Authority to meet their duty to ensure that all children can receive a suitable full-time education - when they need it.
- 5.2 To share with schools the pathways into alternative provision which includes schools having a commissioning role.

#### **6. Implications and Considerations**

- 6.1 Impact on schools:
  - 6.1.1 A key element of the draft strategy will be working with schools to design an Alternative Provision system that both meets the statutory duties of the Local Authority, and provides places that can be accessed by schools to meet the needs of the children and young people on their school roll.
- 6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular

communities:

- 6.2.1 The draft Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategy is a key element in ensuring that all children have access to high quality, suitable full-time education.
- 6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:
  - 6.3.1 The views of School Forum and Ed SEND are being sought on the draft Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategy. Feedback will be used to update the Strategy before a wider consultation process is undertaken in the Autumn Term 2022 with all schools, parents and all interested parties.
- 6.4 Financial implications:
  - 6.4.1 None as a direct result of this report. The financial implications of specific proposals will be considered as part of the options appraisal process.
  - 6.4.2 The draft Alternative Provision Strategy development can also be thought of as a component part of the wider High Needs Action Plan (DBV programme).
- 6.5 Legal implications:
  - 6.5.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient, suitable school places to enable all children can receive a suitable full-time education.
  - 6.5.2 Specific proposals are subject to statutory processes and consultations
- 6.6 Risk implications:
  - 6.6.1 The delivery of places in a timely manner, within both financial and capital constraints that meet the need of children and young people living in Solihull.
- 6.7 Equality implications:
  - 6.7.1 Delivering an Alternative Provision system in Solihull seeks to improve outcomes for children and young people with additional needs to ensure they are supported throughout their life and receive the support they need to be successful, independent young adults.
- 7. List of appendices referred to**
  - 7.1 Appendix A – Draft Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategy
- 8. Background papers used to compile this report**
  - 8.1 Discussion Paper – Alternative Provision in Solihull
- 9. List of other relevant documents**
  - 9.1 None