

South Gloucestershire council

SCHOOLS FORUM

13th April 2021

High Needs Working Group (HNWG) Update

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the work of the HNWG.

Background

2.1

The Schools Forum has agreed to transfer £2.2 million of funding from the School Block to the High Needs Block to support investment which will enable improvements to be achieved and which involve more efficient use of resources. It is essential that accelerated progress in addressing the deficit can be demonstrated.

2.2

A deficit recovery programme of work has been formulated with an agreed governance and reporting structure. There are five priority areas of focus (themes) which will provide the opportunity to improve efficiency and reduce expenditure. These themes will feed into the overall DfE deficit recovery plan underpinning the programme.

2.3

The themes have been selected after determining the main causes of the deficit using a cause and effect diagram and extensive data analysis on both nationally and locally available data.

Programme governance structure and communication

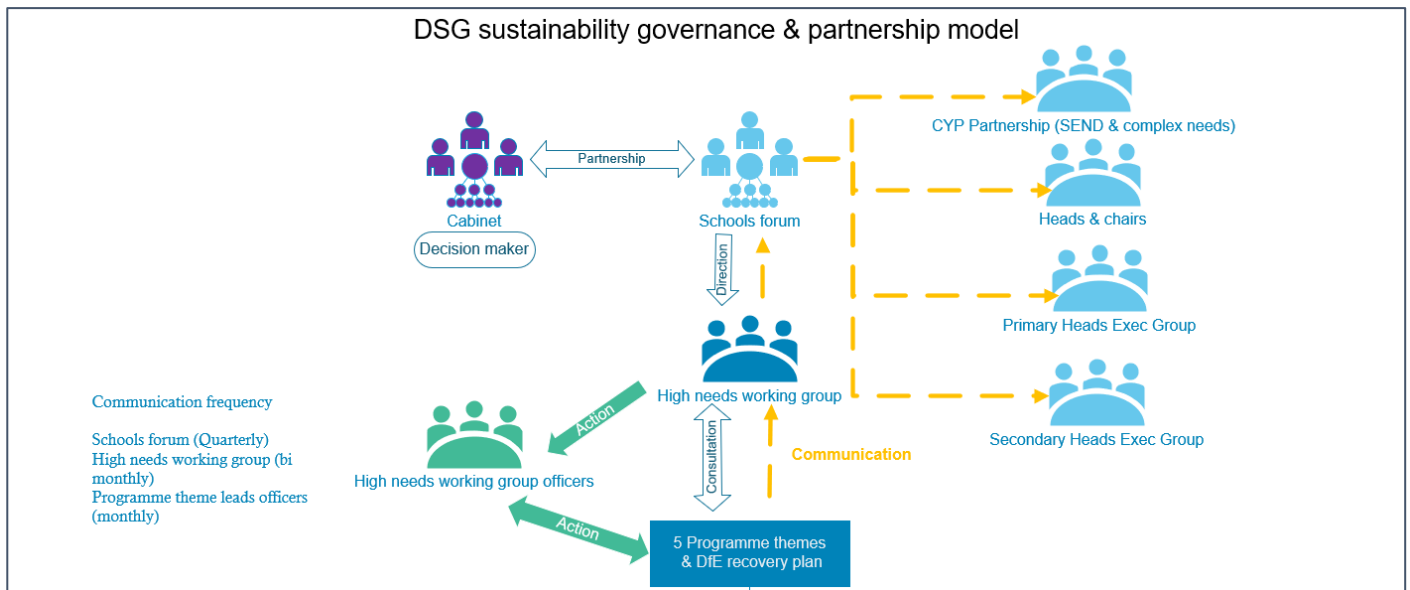
3.1

The governance structure is illustrated in Figure 1. The High needs working group, taking their direction from the Schools Forum, provides consultation, direction and challenge to the High needs working group officers where the programme themes are managed and the work carried out. The role of the HNWG is clear, and the group will consider the further link with the governance structures at the next HNWG meeting as this was raised at Schools Forum.

3.2

Communication flows between the groups are at an agreed frequency. Messages to external stakeholders such as the CYP Partnership (SEND & complex needs) will follow each Schools Forum meeting. The planned developments have now been shared with key stakeholder groups and the HNWG are moving to a position of a regular communications pattern as outlined in Fig 1.

Figure 1



4. DSG deficit recovery programme plan

4.1

A draft programme plan is illustrated in Figure 2 below. This was shared in the previous report to Schools Forum. The five themes each have a lead officer. The key objective of the theme is stated under the name. The smaller circles highlight interdependent work. Work has taken place over the past few months to create capacity and direction to the specific work flow area. The progress on the elements of this plan will be considered in the HNWG on 6th May.

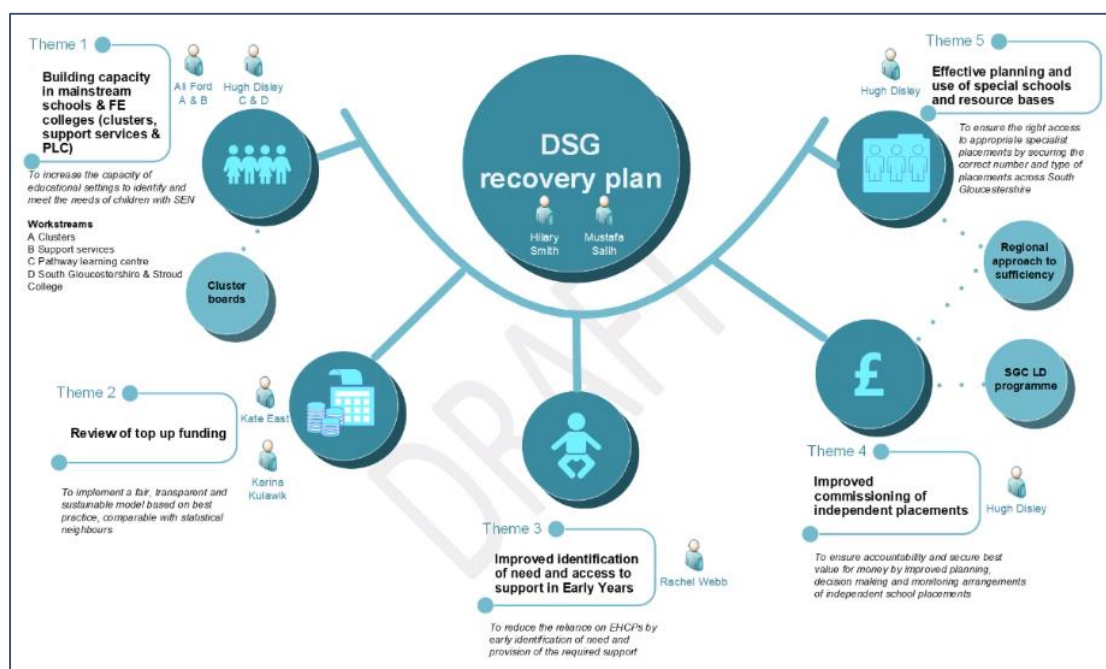
4.2

The governance structures are now in place in key areas and the work streams are taking shape. A focus on careful consideration of the links within and between the difference strands is now an area for discussion.

4.3

Theme 2 – Review of top up funding, a new project is developing well with a core group working with LA officers and consultants to review different types of funding models. Focus groups have taken place, including sessions with parents/carers and representation on the sub-group. Proposed banding structures will be shared with all stakeholders and a draft decision-making process will be signed off by the HNWG on 6th May.

Figure 2



5. Next steps

5.1 For HNWG to review the **draft programme project initiation document (PID)** and convene all theme project teams ensuring appropriate membership.

5.2. For HNWG to consider all draft project briefs including scope, objectives, deliverables, potential savings, risks and issues for each of the themes and gain sign off.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consider HNWG summary from the meeting scheduled for 6.5.21 to be shared at Schools Forum, including an update on item 5.

Report Author

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