

## **Bristol Schools Forum**

### **Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) Statement of Action**

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	Tuesday 8 June 2021
<b>Time of meeting:</b>	5pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Zoom

#### **1. Purpose of report**

The purpose of the report is to present the Review of Alternative Learning Provision (“ALP Review”) and associated draft ALP Statement of Action (SOA) and co-production proposal to Bristol Schools Forum for information, consultation, and discussion.

#### **2. Recommendation(s)**

The recommendation is that Schools Forum note:

- The content and recommendations of the ALP Review.
- The approach Bristol City Council intends to take in response to the ALP Review.

#### **3. Background**

An outcome of a Judicial Review in SEND required BCC to review the effectiveness of Alternative Learning Provision (ALP). The review was incorporated into Improvement Priority 4.3 of Bristol Local Area Written Statement of Action (WSoA) for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

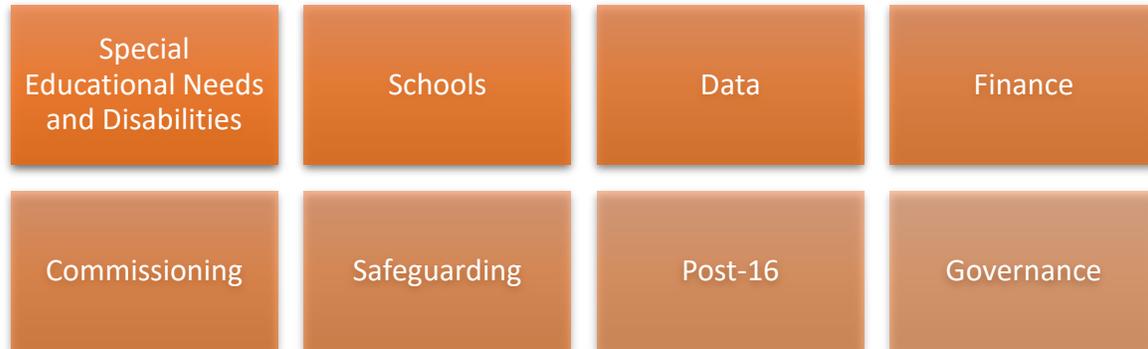
As a response, BCC commissioned an independent review into ALP with the following aims:

- To gain a full understanding of how Alternative Learning Provision is currently being used in Bristol, to enable transparent decision making for future placements and consistency across settings.
- To inform the collaborative approach to specialist education to agree what Bristol would like to achieve with ALP and how it will be used in the future.
- To inform future ALP recommissioning. This links with the Inclusive City Belonging Strategy and the review of Specialist Provision, alongside the ‘Written Statement of Action’ (WSoA) SEND.

This provides momentum for BCC to transform and improve ALP arrangements to better meet the needs of citizens, and is a key part of the reform of the end-to-end SEND system.

#### 4. Summary of ALP Review

The report made **31 recommendations** for improvement in the ALP system. These have been grouped into interlinking themes for delivery.



**ALP and SEND** refers to the current inter-dependency between SEND and ALP with actions to clarify and strengthen processes and relationships between these two areas. There are extremely high numbers of pupils with SEND with either education, health and care (EHC) plans or proceeding through the EHC Needs Assessment process, currently in ALP. High numbers of pupils going to ALP are also presenting with additional needs, particularly Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH), Speech and Language and low literacy and maths skills.

**ALP and Schools** is concerned with supporting and challenging schools with the aim of implementing a graduated response to prevent exclusions and reliance on ALP.

**ALP and Data** indicates improvement is necessary in data capture to facilitate accurate planning and reporting.

**ALP and Finance** shows ALP is used to cover a deficiency in the number of appropriate SEND placements and links to the current review of element 3 funding. While both the ALP and SEND budgets are from the 'High Need' block, different LA Officers are making different placements. A clear protocol for placing children/young people with an EHC plan into AP needs to be agreed.

**ALP and Commissioning** mandates a joint ALP and SEND commissioning strategy along with joint quality assurance processes. This links to the recommissioning of ALP in progress.

**ALP and Safeguarding** covers the strengthening of systems for sharing key information between school and ALP, social and mental health support along with capturing the pupil and parent voice.

**ALP and Post-16** will improve careers advice and guidance to young people and is concerned with moving post-16 support from Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding back into the Local Authority. It will also cover arrangements for supporting young parents.

**ALP and Governance** links ALP to actions in progress with respect corporate themes such as the SEND Written Statement of Action and the Belonging Strategy, which will be launched in Spring 2021. There is also the need for clear system-wide strategic leadership of ALP as the ALP Hub has been working in isolation, with insufficient direction or accountability built into structures.

## 5. ALP Statement of Action

BCC has accepted all the recommendations and the **ALP Statement of Action** sets out BCC's response to the review. It should be noted this is BCC's internal view of the work required and **not the end product**. It is intended to help guide the co-production process.

The final agreed version of the Statement of Action will outline the activity that will occur to deliver against all of the recommendations and the timescales to do so. It will contain agreed milestones for delivery so that progress can be tracked in the delivery phase of the Statement of action.

Delivery will be part of the second phase of the Education Transformation Programme using the governance structure that is in place and progress will be published regularly on the Local Offer.

To deliver an inclusive ALP system that works for all, co-production with ALP stakeholders is required. Information sessions with a range of key stakeholders such as ALP Heads have already taken place.

In addition to the eight delivery themes there will be a cross-cutting co-production workstream. This workstream has two purposes – to co-produce the delivery plan and, once in the delivery phase, to monitor delivery and ensure new systems and processes are fit for purpose. There will be four Reference Groups made up of clusters of stakeholders:



The groups will:

- Review the recommendations and prioritise those which are considered to be most important.

- Review the plans to ensure the right activity is covered and that implementation of the recommendations will be achieved. This is likely to result in changes to the initial planning to produce the final version of the ALP Statement of Action.
- Review the draft recommissioning strategy.

## 6. Sufficiency

Recommendations from the ALP review relating to sufficiency are contained within the ALP and SEND theme. The table below shows the recommendations in the theme and BCC's response. It should be noted the response is the starting point for co-production and not the final plan.

### 6.1 ALP and SEND

Ref.	Recommendation	Summary of response
3	Clear expectations and protocols between ALP hub and SEND teams need to be agreed and clarified.	These recommendations will be delivered through the development of new pathways for the various scenarios when children and young people may be considered for specialist provision and ultimately alternative provision.
11	SEND team do not commission individual bespoke ALP packages. Procurement arrangements need to be agreed by Senior Officers of ALP and SEND.	A review of the consultation process for specialist provision is included along with consideration of out of local authority requests.
12	Sufficiency plan of SEND placements is underway but a plan of how to manage and fund the SEND pupils in ALP provision in the meantime needs to be drawn up and agreed.	BBC plans to introduce Mainstream Awaiting Placement Panel (MAPP) meetings. In the MAPP meeting, the school will have the opportunity to discuss what support they require to meet the needs of children and young people and how to prepare for transition to specialist setting with colleagues from other schools, an Educational Psychologist and representatives from specialist outreach providers.
24	Develop as a matter of urgency a protocol for SEND and 'high cost' placements with ALP Hub to enable appropriate placements.	This also links to recommendation 13 in the Finance theme.
14	A system for joint monitoring, quality assurance and co-ordination of all ALP placements with SEND needs to be established.	BCC plans to increase capacity to enable better, more joined up quality assurance of placements. We will also introduce a new standard operating procedure which will be reflected in the commissioning arrangements.

		This recommendation links to recommendation 16 and also the recommissioning of ALP in section 5.5.
15	A review of Top Up (pre EHCP) funding is urgently needed.	BCC will review current funding arrangements and put in place a new funding matrix for element 3 of High Needs Funding. This will build on learning from other comparable Local Authorities to ensure best practice is followed.

## 7. Finance

Recommendations in the ALP Review relating to finance are contained within the ALP and SEND and ALP and Finance themes. The tables below show the recommendations in the themes and BCC's response. It should be noted the response is the starting point for co-production and not the final plan.

Ref.	Recommendation	Summary of response
15	A review of Top Up (pre EHCP) funding is urgently needed.	BCC will review current funding arrangements and put in place a new funding matrix for element 3 of High Needs Funding. This will build on learning from other comparable Local Authorities to ensure best practice is followed.

Ref.	Recommendation	Summary of response
9	Cost centres and budget lines need to be agreed and match.	Current cost centres and budget lines used for ALP will be reviewed and an appropriate financial structure to monitor spend will be put in place.
10	Officers are unable to meet budget expectations and controls, this needs to be rectified.	The AP/SEND protocol in section 5.1.1 and the alterations to the financial system (recommendation 9) will deliver the changes necessary to implement this recommendation.
13	As a matter of urgency there is a need for a High Needs/Block placement spending protocol/panel.	This links closely with the development of an AP/SEND protocol in section 5.1.1 and will be delivered through the response to those recommendations.

## 8. Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is underway, the draft of which is included in the appendix.

**Summary of significant negative impacts and how they can be mitigated or justified**

Changes to the ALP system have the potential to affect CYP both with and without protected characteristics. As the ALP SOA has not yet been finalised, negative impacts will be mitigated through representative Reference Groups.

These groups will co-produce the ALP SOA ensuring their views are incorporated and that the actions included in the plan reduce any negative impacts on people with protected characteristics. Once the ALP SOA moves into the delivery phase the Reference Groups will continue to monitor delivery with a focus on reducing negative impacts.

**Summary of positive impacts/opportunities to promote the Public Sector Equality Duty**

The changes to the ALP system resulting from the ALP Statement of Action will help to ensure that the educational needs of children and young people (CYP) are met with all CYP in appropriate provision. The key objectives of the programme of work are to implement a fairer system with improved service user experience and transparent decision making. This will benefit all CYP including those with protected characteristics.

## 9. Appendices

No.	Document
1.	Review of Alternative Learning Provision
2.	Draft ALP Statement of Action
3.	Co-production proposal
4.	Equality Impact Assessment