

# SCRUTINY REPORT

**MEETING: Children's Scrutiny Committee**

**DATE: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2026**

**SUBJECT: Local SEND Area Reform Plan**

**REPORT FROM: Ben Dunne, Director Early Years Education and Skills**

## **1.0 BACKGROUND**

**1.1** The Local Area SEND Reform Plan has been developed jointly by Bury Council and NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board and was submitted to the Department for Education on 19 June 2026. The Plan sets out a three-year programme of transformation (2026–2029) to deliver the national SEND reforms and create a more inclusive, sustainable and effective 0–25 SEND system.

**1.2** The plan builds upon strong gains made following the SEND Inspection of Bury's Local Area Partnership in February 2024. At that time, Inspectors found **"widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND"**

Since that inspection and the improving SEND journey all stakeholders have been engaged in, recognised during our recent monitoring inspection, the Local area SEND Reform Plan aims to:

- Strengthen inclusion across mainstream education settings.
- Develop the "Experts at Hand" model to provide coordinated multi-agency support.
- Improve access to specialist support and local provision.
- Strengthen co-production with children, young people and families.
- Improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Create a financially sustainable SEND system through earlier intervention and increased local capacity.

## **2.0 ISSUES**

Key areas for Overview and Scrutiny consideration include:

### **2.1 Policy Development**

- Delivery of the Local SEND Reform Plan and alignment with national SEND reforms.
- Development and implementation of the Bury Inclusion Charter.
- Expansion of Bury's Communities of Practice model.

- Inclusion of parallel reforms that will require strong multi-agency partnerships including the Best Start In Life and Family First Partnership Programmes.
- Development of the Experts at Hand model and neighbourhood-based support arrangements.
- Implementation of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy and associated capital programme.

## **2.2 Performance Monitoring**

Members may wish to monitor progress against key performance indicators including:

- Number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) issued.
- EHCP timeliness.
- Attendance and persistent absence rates for children with SEND.
- Suspension and exclusion rates.
- Educational outcomes at Key Stage 2, GCSE and post-16.
- Parent and carer confidence measures.
- Waiting times for specialist health services.

## **2.3 Future Activity**

Key delivery priorities over the next three years include:

- Embedding inclusive practice across all educational settings.
- Rolling out the Experts at Hand model across all neighbourhoods.
- Expanding local specialist provision and inclusion bases.
- Strengthening workforce development and multi-agency training.
- Improving use of data and performance intelligence.
- Enhancing engagement and co-production with families and young people.

## **2.4 Risks and Risk Register**

The principal risks identified within the Reform Plan include:

- Continued growth in EHCPs and demand for specialist provision exceeding available local capacity.
- Lack of parental confidence leading to increased requests for statutory assessment and escalation.
- Variability in service delivery arising from Greater Manchester-wide commissioning arrangements.
- Recruitment and retention challenges affecting delivery of the Experts at Hand model.
- Challenges in aligning multiple transformation programmes and reform agendas across the local area.

Members may wish to receive periodic updates on risk mitigation actions, programme delivery milestones and performance against agreed outcomes.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the Local Area SEND Reform Plan and the significant programme of transformation that will be delivered between 2026 and 2029. The Plan represents a joint commitment across education, health and care partners to improve inclusion, strengthen support for children and young people with SEND, improve outcomes for families and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:

1. Notes the content of the Bury Local Area SEND Reform Plan.
2. Supports the strategic direction of the reform programme.
3. Requests regular progress reports on delivery, performance and outcomes.
4. Receives periodic updates on identified risks, mitigations and programme governance arrangements.
5. Monitors the impact of the reforms on children, young people and families across the borough

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### **List of Background Papers:-**

**Bury Local Area SEND Reform Plan – Submitted to the DfE on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

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*[Report Author]*

Executive Director sign off Date: \_\_\_\_\_

JET Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_