

Report to:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Paul Turner, Assistant Director – Education, SEND and Early Years.
Date of Meeting:	27 January 2022

ORACLE BUILDING UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To receive an update on the proposals for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision at the Oracle building.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 For the Scrutiny Committee to have oversight in order to provide scrutiny, challenge and support.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure robust scrutiny of the service.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 Using another Council building.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is:

- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

6.1 Park school is at capacity, as is Woodlands School and Highfurlong School. Lotus school is expected to be at capacity in two years.

- 6.2 In order to realign the SEND place planning and the strategic oversight of SEND, the Council needs to find some temporary capacity. This is planned for The Oracle.
- 6.3 This will allow some Park students (sixth form) to be located at The Oracle, freeing up some classroom space at Park Community Academy. Additional building work at Highfurlong Special School has also created some additional capacity, and further work is planned before September 2022.
- 6.4 Following a public consultation, planning continues for the transfer of Park Community Academy's post-16 students into the Oracle building on St Anne's Road. Internal modifications have been completed and minor external modifications are being made following advice from the Fire Service regarding emergency egress from the building.
- 6.5 Sea View Trust is awaiting the outcome of its application to the Education and Skills Funding Agency regarding the change and the Council is liaising with the funders of the building in order to progress a change in the use of the facilities. Discussions are continuing with the Trust regarding tenancy arrangements, which will include continued access for those community groups who currently use the Oracle.

6.6 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Some SEND Capital funding has been assigned to this project to support small modifications to The Oracle building.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 Blackpool Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient Special School places.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There is a risk that we will not be able to meet our statutory duty related to the provision of Special School places.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 SEND is a statutory responsibility and there is a significant impact upon individuals and families if we cannot provide sufficient SEND places.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 An extensive SEND consultation is currently ongoing.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 2020/2030 Education Strategy.
Inclusion Strategy.