1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1. The purpose of this report is to update the Schools Forum on performance of services during the full (financial) year 2018/19 and the current plans for the future commissioning of Cognus services.

FOR INFORMATION

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1. The Board is asked to NOTE:

i) the contents of this report.

3. KEY INFORMATION / ISSUES ARISING

3.1. Services continue to deliver against the agreed with the Schools Forum in 2017, there is generally good performance with some significant over achievement and others less so;

3.2. The new commissioner, Caroline Boardman, has been working with Cognus to develop a set of more meaningful KPIs that will form part of the future overall Commissioning Agreement.

4. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Service delivery performance 2018/19

4.1. The Company has continued to deliver our services to the KPIs agreed with the Schools Forum in 2017. We have also updated KPIs where necessary, for example adding additional targets with the new Paving the Way service, reducing the
expectations for EAL, Autism and SaLT (as funding ceased on 31st March 2019) and adjusting/adding new targets for safeguarding, admissions and attendance. A full breakdown of all the current KPIs is shown in Appendix 1.

4.2. Although there have been some areas of underperformance, in all cases these have been offset by over performance in other KPIs within the same service. This suggests that the teams have been delivering aligned to need, rather than to focus on simply meeting the KPIs provided.

4.3. Our reflection of the year is that largely things have gone well with the following exceptions:

i) The English as an additional language service was difficult to deliver due to significant maternity leave during the year, the service being reduced to zero funding and leadership for the capacity lacking to deliver some of the orders placed;

ii) The Paving the Way service now has a waiting list. Whilst this maybe because the programme has been successful, this is not satisfactory. The lead in time has meant average active cases per month since April 2018 is 66 versus a target of 100. However, we are now we are operating at an average of 125 active cases against the target of 100 (this is 30 active cases per fte (at any one time) which is at the high end of good practice/caseload management);

iii) In safeguarding there have been a number of balancing requirements from LSCB, local authority, school and OfSTED enquiries/complaints to manage. However, this has not led to a reduction in quality for any of the services on offer and schools continue to perform well in their safeguarding practices when an OfSTED inspection happens;

iv) The Elklan training provided through Cognus Therapies has received very good reviews and is being taken up by many more people than anticipated;

v) Sensory Impairment and Early Years teams are very busy and managing to maintain high quality services with increasing demand;

4.4. One of the largest funding streams from the Dedicated Schools Grant is for the provision of the Paving the Way project. A more detailed report is included in Appendix 2 as per the request at the last Schools Forum.

New Commissioning Arrangements
4.5. The Company in undertaking significant meetings with the London Borough of Sutton (Caroline Boardman, Suzanne Toomer and Fiona Phelps) to clearly set out requirements for the Cognus commissioned services in the future, including the development of more meaningful KPIs.

4.6. There have been several challenges identified within this process:

i) Where the funding has been reduced to statutory minimum it is difficult and at times impossible to suggest that there would be anything more than an input or output, meaning that the service cannot be measured on outcomes as would usually be desirable;

ii) Many services now focus on delivery to school and/or educational setting staff (as opposed to directly working with children and young people). The result can be that there is little way to measure the direct impact of our work on children and young people as so many other factors may influence the impact/outcomes;

iii) Except for those involved in the working parties looking at the WSOA outcomes (eg. Reducing exclusions), many schools have yet to be involved in the discussions and we would welcome the opportunity to have a meaningful discussion;

iv) The contract for therapies is now completely separate to the previous arrangements and is changing to a more ‘embedded model’. This will be phased in further through 2019/20;

v) Evolution of the Sutton Education Partnership (SEP) and how this can influence commissioning and in particular a ‘Core/Universal Offer’ at the SEN support level will be very welcome when this is established;

4.7. The next steps are:

i) Cognus agreeing with Caroline Boardman (LBS Commissioner) and Fiona Phelps the approach to SEN Support, including any universal/core elements of services to be provided. Eg. Educational Psychology, Therapies, Attendance and SEN to meet with schools early in each term to discuss potential need and implement strategies, training and/or interventions for those in need;

ii) Evolution of KPIs to confirm how we will be monitored/measured against our objectives;
iii) Trial the above commissioning arrangements and ensure SEP and Schools Forum provide feedback and co-produce services moving forward;

iv) Ensure outreach services and Paving the Way are further embedded across the borough to gain greatest impact wherever possible;

v) Providing updates to SEP and Schools Forum on progress and outputs achieved September 2019 and beyond;

vi) Agree resources and deployment of time and energy to move from current practice to new ways of working which meet need and improve efficiency;

vii) Review the above and adapt services as required;

4.8. We anticipate working towards new KPIs from September 2019.

Good news and positive stories

4.9. The University of Oxford have invited the Early Years Advisory Team at Cognus to team up with them on their latest research project “Texts for Talk”. The research study is designed to support parents in having effective conversations with their preschool children at home using technology.

4.10. Cognus has invested a significant sum of funds into buying Sensory Impairment equipment for children after the Sensory Impairment team identified several children who were not able to fully access education due to neither health or the Local Authority being able to commit to purchase the equipment. However, this was a one-off payment and alternative arrangements must be made for the future.

4.11. The Virtual School are trialling new approaches to using technology and have purchased Microsoft Go devices for settings that are a significant distance from Sutton. We will evaluate the pilot before considering further investment based on the savings in both time and travel costs of trips to other parts of England.

5. Risk Assessment

5.1. The Company remains concerned about the absence of funding for autism and therapy services which would otherwise be providing support for individual children and young people and which would train and upskills setting staff working with children and young people with autism. This is under review with the conversations described in section 4.7, section i) above.

5.2. We are concerned about the length of the waiting list/time on the Paving the Way service. We have considered internal changes to the project and have allocated
some more resources. The cause of the waiting list is the high volume of referrals to a project which has developed an excellent reputation.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

   6.1. There are no legal implications.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

   7.1. None.

8. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

   8.1. All services continue to consider the impact and promotion of equality of opportunity to all children and young people.