

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 15 September 2016

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Operational Director, Education, Inclusion & Provision

**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Young People & Families

**SUBJECT:** Closure of Westfield Primary School Resource Provision Base for Pupils with Hearing Impairment and Specific Learning Difficulties

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the consultation on the proposal to close the Resource Provision Base for pupils with Hearing Impairment and Specific Learning Difficulties at Westfield Primary School. It seeks permission to commence a four week statutory consultation on the proposal and to present a further report in November 2016.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive Board**

- 1) note the response to the first phase of the consultation; and**
- 2) approve the statutory consultation on the closure of the Hearing Impaired Resource Provision Base at Westfield Primary School.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following approval from Executive Board on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 consultation commenced on the proposal to close Westfield Primary School Resource Provision Base for pupils with Hearing Impairment and Specific Learning Difficulties.
- 3.2 In September 2016 there will be 3 pupils accessing the Resource Provision Base. All 3 pupils are in Key Stage 2, there are no pupils in Key Stage 1. Feedback from families of children in early years indicates that they would choose for their children to attend their local school with additional Teacher of the Deaf support in line with National Sensory Impaired Partnership ( NatSIP) recommended support levels.
- 3.3 With the advances in technology and the right support children now make greater progress by being a part of a mainstream peer group with language support. To ensure pupils have the right support the proposal seeks to close the Resource Base and reinvest the funding into increasing specialist support for pupils in local schools.

3.4 The Local Authority will continue to provide support to Westfield until the three pupils have completed their primary education. Funding will be provided to support the two teaching assistants and the Specialist Teacher will continue to support the school in line with the NatSIP support levels.

#### **4.0 CONSULTATION**

4.1. The first phase of the consultation included: parents at the school and the Resource Base, Governors, staff, all schools, pre-schools with Hearing Impaired pupils, Halton NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, the Chair of Halton Impart, Diocesan Authorities, neighbouring authorities, trade unions, the local MP and local Elected Members. A copy of the consultation document is attached at Appendix A.

4.2 On Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 two consultation meetings were held one for staff and governors, the second for parents and the public. The notes from the meeting with staff and governors is attached as Appendix B. The notes from the parents and public meeting are attached as Appendix C.

4.3 The first phase of the consultation commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016 and closed on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016. A total of 14 responses were received to the consultation. Consultees were asked whether they supported the proposal, they were also given the opportunity to provide their comments.

- 3 of the responses supported the proposal – 2 x Primary Headteachers and 1 x Councillor
- 1 response asked for further information – 1 x Councillor
- 9 of the responses did not support the proposal – these responses included 3 responses linked to one pupil in the current base, 1 response from the two members of staff working within the base, 5 responses from parents – 4 from parents of pupils currently attending the school and 1 from a parent whose child previously attended the school.

4.4 The key issues raised during the consultation included the following:

- Support for the current pupils in the Hearing Impaired Base;
- Viability of current provision;
- Support for pupils should the base close;
- Progress of pupils with Hearing Impairment in a mainstream school;
- Cost cutting;
- Recruitment of Specialist Teachers of the Deaf
- Use of the facilities; and
- Support for other pupils with special needs in the school.

Details of the comments made and the response are included in Appendix D.

## **5.0 STATUTORY PROPOSAL**

- 5.1 Executive Board is asked to consider the responses received to the consultation and give approval for officers to carry out a statutory consultation on the proposal to close Westfield Primary School Hearing Impaired Base.
- 5.2 The statutory consultation will commence on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 for four weeks closing on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The proposal will be to close Westfield Hearing Impaired Resource Base with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 but to continue to support the three pupils in the base until their primary education at Westfield Primary has been completed. Funding will be reinvested into enhancing the specialist support available for pupils with a hearing impairment in schools across the borough. A copy of the proposal is attached as Appendix E.
- 5.3 Once the representation period has been completed a summary of the responses will be prepared and a further report submitted to Executive Board on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016, so that a decision on the proposal can be determined.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Resource Base currently receives £10,000 for each of its 6 places giving it a total of £60,000. £20,623 is provided for a Signer each year and an additional £5,081.73 is allocated for each pupil placed in the base.
- 6.2 Funding will continue to be provided to Westfield Primary School to support the costs of the two teaching assistants until the three current pupils have completed their primary education at the school.
- 6.3 The funding from the unit will be reinvested into employing specialist staff to support pupils across the borough with Hearing Impairment.

## **7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 By increasing the peripatetic team support can be provided to more pupils with a hearing impairment.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **8.1 Children and Young People**

Supporting pupils with a hearing impairment in their mainstream local school is more inclusive as it allows pupils to be educated within their own community, alongside their siblings, friends and peer group.

## **8.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**

None identified.

## **8.3 A Healthy Halton**

None identified.

## **8.4 A Safer Halton**

None identified.

## **8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None identified.

## **9.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

9.1 As reducing number of parents are choosing to have their children educated in a HR Resource Base it is becoming more difficult for the base to be financially viable and to be able to recruit the appropriately qualified staff.

9.2 As the majority of families would prefer their child to be educated in a mainstream setting with support we may not be able to provide the appropriate level of support across the borough to meet need unless we can reinvest the resources saved from the closure of the Base.

## **10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

10.1 This proposal is aimed at ensuring pupils with Hearing Impairment can be educated within their own local community and is therefore more inclusive.

10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken on this proposal.

## **11.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION**

11.1 Provide a more inclusive offer for pupils with HI giving them the opportunity to be educated with support alongside their peers.

## **12.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

12.1 Retaining the current provision. This was rejected as it is less inclusive and more costly.

### **13.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

13.1 A decision will be required by Executive Board prior to the end of November 2016 so that the base can be closed with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

### **14.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Statutory Notice January 2010	Rutland House	ann.mcintyre@halton.gov.uk
Executive Board Report 14/07/16	Municipal Building, Widnes	ann.mcintyre@halton.gov.uk