

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 8 April 2010
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Young People
SUBJECT: Primary SEN Unit Review
WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report summarises the response to the statutory consultation undertaken on Primary Special Unit Provision in Halton. An outline of the decision making process is also included.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) to receive the report on the proposals for Primary SEN Unit provision.

(2) to approve the proposals, in line with the response to the formal consultation, within the statutory timescale of two months from the end of the representation period (deadline 24th April 2010).

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The review of SEN units resulted in a set of proposals designed to provide flexible provision within mainstream schools that allow pupils to spend as much time as possible learning alongside their peers, depending on their individual needs.

Approval was given by Executive Board on 6th November 2008 to commence consultation on the provision of SEN units within mainstream primary schools. Consultation took place in March 2009. The feedback from the initial consultation led to revised proposals with a second round of consultation in June 2009 after approval to commence consultation on the revised proposals was given by the Executive Board on 4th June 2009.

The following was proposed:

- Assessment: Reception and KS1
(*Cognition & Learning and SLCN*) 14 places
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) KS1 & KS2 28 places
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) 20 places
- Social Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD) 14 places
- Complex Learning Needs (*Cognition & Learning*) – KS2 10 places
- Profound Hearing Impairment (HI) 6 places

3.2 The majority of those who responded to the first stage of informal

consultation supported the proposed change in provision.

3.3 The following people were consulted as part of the SEN consultation:

- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of all secondary schools;
- Headteachers and Chair of Governors of all special schools;
- Secondary SENCOs;
- Staff and pupils;
- Parent/carers of pupils currently attending SEN unit provision;
- Trade Unions;
- Diocesan Authorities;
- Neighbouring Local Authorities;
- Voluntary Agencies;
- Parent Partnership Service;
- Halton and St Helen's Primary Care Trust; and
- All schools nursery, infant, junior, primary and special schools.

3.4 Public consultation meetings in Widnes and Runcorn took place on:
4th March 2009, 11th March 2009
12th March 2009, 18th March 2009 and
8th June 2009, 10th June 2009
11th June 2009, 16th June 2009

3.5 On 19th November 2009 Executive Board approval was given to undertake statutory consultation on the Primary SEN Unit proposals.

A copy of the statutory notice and proposal is attached at **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**.

The statutory notice was published on the 14th January 2010. Public consultation meetings were held on 25th, 26th 27th and 28th January 2010. The representation period ended on 25th February 2010.

There have been 137 responses to the formal consultation with 135 responses in support of the proposals published in the statutory notice.

Of the 2 responses not in favour, the reasons given where:

1. That mainstream resourced provision for ASD pupils was not a helpful addition to our provision and wanted the LA to provide an Autism Specific School.

However, the LA already has Special School provision for children with Autism 2-19yrs and considered the resource base provision attached to a mainstream school a supportive addition to current provision to enable access to a continuum of provision in order to meet the continuum of need.

2. Did not agree that children with Moderate Learning Difficulties should be in mainstream even with support.

In line with the development of inclusive schools and the more specific

diagnosis of pupil needs, the majority of pupils, through Quality First teaching, adapting teaching strategies to learning styles with curriculum differentiation, can have their needs met within local mainstream schools.

- 3.6 The Decision maker (Executive Board) must decide the proposals within two months of the end of the representation period otherwise the decision must be referred to the Adjudicator for a decision. **Appendix C** details the issues the Decision maker needs to consider.

The Decision maker can decide to:

- Reject the proposals;
- Approve the proposals;
- Approve the proposals with a modification;
- Approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition.
- Conditional approval can only be granted in a limited number of circumstances related specifically to Academy provision or changes in admission arrangements relating to another school. A date by which the conditions should be met must be set.

The reason for the decision must be given whether it is approved or rejected. It should also include the factors and criteria for the decision.

A copy of the decision must be sent to:

- Each objector
- The Secretary of State
- LSC
- Local C of E Diocese
- The Bishop of the RC Diocese; and
- The Office of the Schools Adjudicator.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 The Brow Primary School

- Resourced provision to accommodate 7 pupils for assessment.
- Resourced provision to accommodate 10 pupils with speech, language and communication needs.

The Grange Infants School

Resourced provision to accommodate 7 KS1 pupils with a diagnosis of Autism, this includes pupils with a diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome. There would also be capacity within this provision for additional outreach support for pupils in other primary schools within the borough.

The Grange Junior School

Resourced provision to accommodate 7 KS2 pupils with a diagnosis of Autism, this includes pupils with a diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome. There would also be capacity within this provision for additional outreach support for pupils in other primary schools within the borough.

Palace Fields Primary

Resourced provision to accommodate 10 pupils with complex learning needs.

Woodside Primary

Resourced provision to accommodate 7 pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.

Weston Point Primary

Resourced provision to accommodate 7 pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.

Westfield Primary School

Resourced provision with 6 places to be made available for pupils with hearing impairment and this may include pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties.

Oakfield Primary School

- Resourced provision to accommodate 7 pupils for assessment.
- Resourced provision to accommodate 10 pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties.

Simms Cross Primary School

Resourced provision to accommodate 7 KS1 and 7 KS2 pupils with a diagnosis of Autism, this includes pupils with a diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome. There would also be capacity within this provision for additional outreach support for pupils in other primary schools within the borough.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The funding formula for Primary SEN provision will need to be revised to reflect the change in provision. Provision will need to be made within the Capital Programme for adaptations for schools to reflect the change in provision.

The purpose of the SEN review is to make provision fit for purpose and to meet current and future need. It was agreed, when embarking on the Primary Review that funding saved would be recycled, so that resources would be made fit for purpose. The funding for the revised provision was to be found from within the existing Budget, this would come from surplus places currently funded within existing SEN resourced provision.

The Strategy for Inclusion for Pupils with SEN Review 2008 states one of the aims is to '**agree a process to recycle the resources in under used provision** to best meet low incidence needs within the mainstream school community. To achieve this we will involve and engage with Head Teachers throughout the process.'

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The current model represents an inefficient use of resources and this review will create a more efficient use of funding for SEN unit provision.

The Council's "Strategy for Inclusion of Pupils with SEN" provides the policy content and framework by which Halton intends to meet the Special Educational Needs of young people in the Borough.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

A comprehensive review of the transport and access across the borough is currently being undertaken to ensure there is safe, accessible and sustainable provision to all schools following the re-organisation of the SEN Unit provision.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Proposals if agreed would:

- Increase the choice, diversity, inclusion and high standards in the Borough;
- Reduce the surplus capacity within units in Halton schools;
- Improve access to education facilities and equipment;
- Improve access to specialist staff, in Education and Health through Speech and Language Services;
- Develop outreach support to mainstream Primary Schools in the Borough;
- Extend access to suitable accommodation;
- Establish the supply of suitable places within a mainstream setting in the Borough; and
- Enable all pupils to have the opportunity to experience provision to match their individual need.

8.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Educational attainment of children and young people will have a significant impact on their future employment, learning and skills.

8.3 A Healthy Halton

All pupils will have access to appropriate health provision.

8.4 A Safer Halton

All schools prioritise safeguarding in their provision.

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Schools are central to urban regeneration.

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

9.1 Provision for SEN within mainstream units does not match the needs of the Boroughs young people. The present provision for units within schools does not provide value for money due to the number of surplus places.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

10.1 Educational attainment is central to reducing inequalities and ensuring the best outcomes for all children and young people in Halton with a particular focus on vulnerable groups.

The review of SEN Unit provision must be inclusive and reflect the contribution of all schools. The review aims to increase diversity, access and choice, address under performance, and provide more integrated local services.

10.2 The right to be educated in local provision alongside their peers.

11.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

To enable the process to be completed within statutory timescales. Decision to proceed to implementation must be made within 2 months of the end of the formal consultation.

11.1 Mainstream Primary SEN units are not matching the present and future requirements of the Borough. At present, there are surplus places within Primary mainstream SEN units.

12.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

To leave provision as it is. This would leave the Council vulnerable to challenge on the basis of need and value for money.

13.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

13.1 Approval to proceed with the proposals for primary SEN unit provision must be agreed within 2 months of the end of the six weeks statutory notice period (21st April 2010). Implementation in September 2011 to be in line with the implementation of the agreed Secondary resourced provision.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
OFSTED Inspection of LEA – January 2004	Grosvenor House	Judith Kirk
Strategy for the Inclusion of Pupils with SEN – 2006/7	Grosvenor House	Judith Kirk
Building Schools for the Future/ Primary Capital Programme	Grosvenor House	Judith Kirk / Ann McIntyre

