

Subject:	Special Educational Needs and Disability Review		
Date of Meeting:	6th June 2016		
Report of:	Pinaki Ghoshal		
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Wards affected:	All		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- 1.1.1 Inform the Committee of the outcome of the informal engagement phase of the proposed restructure of special educational provision;
- 1.1.2 Set out the governance arrangements and the revised timeline for the review and decision making process.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee endorses the changes to the engagement timeline as set out in appendix 3
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees to a further report being presented on 3.10.16 with recommendations relating to the reorganisation of provision that require further consultation
- 2.3 That the Committee notes the following appendices;
 - 2.3.1 Outcome of this first stage of the informal engagement process as set out in Appendix 1
 - 2.3.2 Governance arrangements set out in Appendix 2

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A wide ranging review of provision and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities took place in 2014/15. The joint meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children Young People and Skills Committee on 10th November 2015 gave approval for detailed proposals to be drawn up which would:
 - integrate special provision across education, health and care for all children with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in special schools and Pupil Referral units

- offer an improved and innovative curriculum, greater extended day opportunities and more home support for families
- achieve a more efficient and financially viable pattern of provision by re-structuring the current six special schools and two Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) to form three integrated special provisions across the city and developing more inclusive nursery provision in the early years.

3.2 The proposed timeline for the consultation and decision making process was approved by the Children, Young People and Skills Committee on January 11th 2016 and community engagement and informal consultation with stakeholders began in February 2016.

3.3 The consultation

3.3.1 The initial phase of engagement began on the 1st February 2016 and ended on 22nd April 2016. A consultation questionnaire was constructed with input from special school head teachers and the Parent and Carers' Council and meetings were arranged with stakeholders

3.3.2 The online consultation questionnaire was promoted through the council website, social media, the Local Offer, schools bulletin, via Amaze and the Parent and Carers' Council, school newsletters and direct communication to other stakeholder groups

3.3.3 Participants were given an explanation of the current proposals and then asked 7 questions. At the end of each question participants could respond with comments and there was further opportunity to comment at the end

3.3.4 In addition to the online questionnaire, a total of 28 consultation meetings were arranged, to include the following stakeholders; young people, parent carers, education service teams, social care teams, head teachers, school staff, health services, trade unions, governors and management Committees.

3.3.5 In order to engage with as many parents and young people as possible, coffee mornings for parents were attended and officers telephoned parents of young people in the Pupil Referral Units to seek their views and thus extend participation in the consultation

3.3.6 There was a range of responses to questions;

- The large majority of responses agreed with proposals to;
 - integrate services across education, health and care and to
 - to increase support for parent/carers
- Most responses supported the proposals to;
 - establish lead partner mainstream schools to work with the new integrated specialist hubs and
 - to create inclusive specialist nursery provision

Some respondents expressed reservations about how these would work in practice and whether there would be sufficient funding

- Positive and negative views were more balanced in relation to proposals to
 - create ‘virtual special school places’ in mainstream schools for young people with social, emotional and mental health needs and
 - to move to three integrated specialist hubs from the current six special schools and two Pupil Referral Units.

There was a small majority of respondents in favour of proposals in both cases but many expressed concerns about whether there would be enough funding to make the virtual special school places work in practice.

In relation to the three integrated hubs, a number of participants were concerned about change from valued current provision and were worried about having larger special schools.

- The final question allowed participants to score their highest priority about the proposals and the top three were:
 - Staff working in an integrated on-site team across education, health and care
 - Keeping the same number of places for specialist provision
 - Ensuring at least the same number of staff for children in our special schools

3.3.7 Analysis of all comments including the open comments was completed in partnership with volunteer parent and voluntary sector representatives who joined officers to review the feedback using an agreed framework to identify themes and record significant issues for further consideration.

3.3.8 A more detailed analysis of responses is contained in appendix 1 and all online portal comments have been made available to members of the Children’s Committee

4 Community engagement and participation

4.1 Substantial community engagement and participation has taken place in the conduct of the review and the consultation process and will continue throughout the implementation phase. There is wide representation of stakeholders across the governance and management arrangements for the review, a summary of which is included in appendix 2

4.2 Three project groups were established for each of the 3 areas of the proposals, notably provision for:

- Learning difficulties
- Social emotional and mental health needs
- Early Years

4.2.1 Each group consists of a broad range of stakeholders who would be affected by the changes in some way and who together have a breadth of

expertise and experience to support the LA in its intention to coproduce specific options for change on which to formally consult.

- 4.2.2 The groups have been meeting together since early spring and discussions have been constructive, informed by the regular interim analysis of consultation feedback. The purpose of the groups is to form a partnership with stakeholders to coproduce specific and detailed proposals regarding future SEN provision in the city.
- 4.3 The timeline approved by the Committee on 11 January 2016 set out an engagement phase to finish on 22 April 2016 followed by specific proposals regarding the shape of future provision presented to the June Children, Young People and Skills Committee meeting before then going out to formal consultation with interested parties. However the project groups feel that more time is needed before they are able to support the drawing up of more specific proposals. This will enable full consideration of the issues that have been raised during the initial engagement phase.
- 4.4 The timeline has therefore been revised to extend the time period within which specific proposals will be drawn up. Detailed proposals will now be brought to Committee on 3 October 2016 giving time to fully consider all responses to the consultation, to ensure proposals mitigate key concerns and to allow the project groups more time to work on the detail of proposals to come back to Committee. The revised timeline still ensures that the Authority has sufficient time to comply with the statutory processes which must be adhered to in order to achieve the proposed restructure of provision. The revised timeline is attached as Appendix 3.

5 FOUNDATIONS FOR CHANGE

5.1 Property

Bringing together our current provision into 3 integrated 'hubs' would require a long lead in to allow for capacity assessments, design, tendering and finally construction.

It is therefore considered prudent to commence consideration of property options at an early stage in the process to ensure that these can be accommodated in the delivery timeline.

We propose therefore to undertake feasibility work looking into the possibility of the Downs View site for the integrated provision in the East and the Hillside and Downs Park sites for the integrated provision in the West. The range of sites currently occupied in the centre of the city will also need review.

A sum of £5 million has been provisionally included in the capital programme for work required to deliver the outcomes of this review over the next two years. It will be necessary to revisit this figure once the final proposals are decided upon.

It will also be necessary to have certainty over budgets for any adaptations prior to publication of the statutory notices as this is required as part of the Full Proposal Information.

5.2 Extending the support available to families

Over 85% of respondents to the online questionnaire endorsed the proposal to offer more support to parents where children have complex special needs and/ or challenging behaviour. The proposal is for this support to be offered as an early intervention and to be more personalised and bespoke to the needs of each child and family.

Currently family support is provided from a range of sources, including voluntary organisations such as Amaze, Extratime and Barnados, schools, LA services and partner organisations. We plan to pull together and review the support available to parents, so as to be able to extend and personalise the offer. If proposals to create integrated specialist hubs are approved, in time the hubs will offer this support as part of their integrated education, health and care provision.

Where we can, we also hope to build on the good practice in joint commissioning services with the CCG and Public Health to ensure coherent and efficient use of resources.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The purpose of proposals to re-organise our special school and PRU provision is to improve our provision for young people with the most complex needs. The aim is to enhance curriculum and extended day activities within settings offering fully integrated education, health and care support and improved support for families where children have very complex needs and/or challenging behaviour.
- 6.2 The reorganisation also needs to offer better value so that improvements to provision for children with SEND are affordable and sustainable into the future. Proposals are predicated on keeping and slightly increasing the number of specialist places and keeping the same ratio of teachers and support staff to children but consolidating and streamlining provision so that it is more cost effective to run.
- 6.3 The LA is aware of the need to be sensitive to the uncertainties caused by the prospect of change for families of vulnerable children with complex needs and for the dedicated staff teams in schools and health and care settings who support them. We will take care therefore to ensure that proposals have been fully scrutinised by all stakeholders and informed by their views as part of a co-production model.
- 6.4 The proposal in this report therefore is to delay any specific recommendations about re-organisation of provision into three integrated hubs until the October meeting of the Children Young People and Skills Committee, thus giving the project groups more time to consider feedback and develop specific proposals.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 These proposals are about using SEN funding in the best way to meet the needs of all children and young people with high needs. The proposals state that the intention is to retain at least the same number of specialist placements for children with SEN and disabilities but to re-structure and re-organise provision. This approach will safeguard Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) high needs block funding levels whilst, at the same time, delivering greater economies of scale resulting in reduced unit costs. Financial analysis has shown that over 5 years, £900,000 has been spent on financial protection for special schools with low numbers and the proposals within the report mean that resources will in future be directly allocated to support the needs of children, and will not impact on the frontline support.
- 7.2 In order to facilitate the necessary property changes a sum of £5m has been set aside in the capital programme to support the SEND review.

Finance Officer Consulted: Steve Williams Date: 11/05/16

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 In order to achieve the proposed reorganisation of specialist schools it will be necessary to follow the statutory processes set out in the school organisation legislation, in particular the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and associated regulations. These processes require periods of consultation with all interested parties, the publication of statutory notices and further representation periods before any final decisions can be taken. The revised time line set out in Appendix 3 will still allow sufficient time for all necessary statutory processes to be completed before the target dates for implementation from 2017-2020.

Lawyer Consulted: Serena Kynaston Date: 11/05/16

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 The existing Equalities Impact Assessment will be updated when final proposals are presented to the CYPS Committee in October

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 None at this stage

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 None at this stage

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1

Report on the consultation and engagement process

Appendix 2

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Review – Arrangements for Governance and Management

Appendix 3.

The revised timeline

Circulated in Part Two

1. A print-out of the responses to the questionnaire received via the online portal.
2. A copy of the written and email responses received

Background Documents

1. Special educational needs and learning disability strategy-next stage proposals. Paper to joint meeting on 10th November 2015 of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children, Young People and Skills Committee

