

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date: **14 June 2005**

Title of Report: **Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Specialist Provision**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Purpose of Report: **To inform the Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation on the SEN Review and to make recommendations for future action.**

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. note the outcomes of the consultation on the SEN Review and agree to disseminate the report attached as Annex 2 to consultees;**
- 2. agree to issue the 'Next Steps' booklet (Annex 3) as the basis for the future plans for the review; and**
- 3. agree that the four key priorities arising from the review (Annex 1) should be to:**
 - a. co-ordinate and publicise the significant number of initiatives and strategies for promoting good behaviour in schools, through the work of the recently established Behaviour Board, with the aim of providing comprehensive advice on resources and support, including those present in specialist SEN provision, for promoting good behaviour;**
 - b. review the range and scope of East Sussex maintained specialist provision with the aim of increasing flexibility and reducing out of county placements. This should include consulting on the options for the changed use of St Mary's Special School, Horam, and the development of plans for multi-agency (including education, social care and health) co-ordinated services for children on the autistic spectrum (autistic spectrum disorder – ASD) and their families;**
 - c. prepare for the pilot delegation of SEN funds to one or more local partnerships for children in 2006/07 and undertake a cost/benefit analysis;**
 - d. extend out of school activities in special schools and specifically:**
 - i. produce costed options for increased overnight respite for children with autism and report back to the Cabinet for a decision by December 2005;**
 - ii. pilot the establishment of out of school activities in the South Downs Community Special School, Eastbourne**

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 The intention of the SEN Review is to use existing resources more effectively. The actions proposed in this paper can be managed through re-allocating existing resources except the proposed changed use of St Mary's, Horam. Consideration will need to be given to resourcing this development when preparing the Capital Programme for future years. Provision has been made by the Cabinet of one-off funding to support the Review in 2005/06. In the longer term, there may be a need for a 'spend to save' strategy in order to achieve savings in the currently high level of spending on agency providers within education and social care.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 A wide ranging consultation on the recommendations of the Project Board overseeing a review

of provision for children and young people with special educational needs in East Sussex took place in the Spring term 2005. A report on the outcomes of the consultation is attached as Annex 2. The membership of the Project Board is included in Annex 3.

2.2 The review has two core objectives:

- (i) To promote greater inclusion in East Sussex schools (special and mainstream)
- (ii) To improve further the quality and range of provision available in East Sussex by using existing resources more effectively.

2.3 East Sussex has a relatively high number of pupils attending maintained special schools as well as a high number of pupils attending independent and non-maintained fee-charging special schools compared to the national picture and our statistical neighbour local authorities. This is despite being a relatively high spending authority on special educational needs.

2.4 The Project Board also recommended that a number of other actions are undertaken both in the short and medium term to address the consultation recommendations and the aims of the review. These are detailed in Annex 3 within the 'Next Steps' booklet. Each action will be supported by an action plan identifying the key milestones, responsibilities and intended outcomes. The Project Board recommended that the most immediate priority should be given to four key areas of activity:

1. co-ordinate and publicise the significant number of initiatives and strategies for promoting good behaviour in schools, through the work of the recently established Behaviour Board, with the aim of providing comprehensive advice on resources and support, including those present in specialist SEN provision, for promoting good behaviour;
2. review the range and scope of local maintained specialist provision and ensure that it is best placed to meet the needs of the children and young people with the most complex needs including options for the changed use of St Mary's School, Horam, and the development of multi-agency co-ordinated services for children with ASD and their families;
3. work closely with one or more Local Partnerships for Children (LPCs) to establish procedures and protocols for the pilot delegation of SEN funding to the LPC in 2006/07, attempting to resolve the issues raised in the consultation and avoiding pitfalls, and to undertake a cost/benefit analysis;
4. extend out of school activities in special schools and specifically:
 - i. produce costed options for increased overnight respite for children with autism and report back to the Cabinet for a decision by December 2005;
 - ii. pilot the establishment of out of school activities in the South Downs Special School, Eastbourne.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

3.1 The actions proposed in this paper are intended to address the objectives of the SEN Review described in paragraph 2.2 and to bring East Sussex more in line with benchmarking data from other local authorities and, in particular, those of our statistical neighbour authorities.

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Local Members: Councillors Bentley, Dowling, Dyason, Gubby, Harris, Murphy, Skilton and Thomas

Commentary on the Four Key Priorities of the SEN Review

1. Behaviour

- 1.1 The behaviour of children in school is a key area of concern to schools and parents alike. Not all children with behavioural difficulties have special educational needs but there has been a substantial increase in the numbers and proportions of children with statements of SEN for behaviour. In 1999 there were 305 statements for behaviour representing 14% of all statements. In 2005 there were 380 statements representing 16% of the total. There has also been an increase in placements for pupils with behavioural difficulties in independent and non-maintained fee charging schools over that period. In 1999 there were 47 such placements (23% of the total) and in 2005 there were 55 placements (27% of the total). Mainstream schools are reporting increasing concerns about pupil behaviour and there has been an increase in fixed term and permanent exclusions over the last year.
- 1.2 There is a considerable quantity of on-going work to support schools in managing pupil behaviour through activities such as the 'Owning Every Child' initiative, advice and guidance to schools requiring additional support, the implementation of the national Key Stage 3 Behaviour and Attendance Strategy, participation in the pilot of the national primary behaviour strategy, outreach from the Behaviour Support Services based at Cuckmere House and New Horizons Schools, and the emotional literacy project. A Behaviour Board has been established with a multi-agency membership and including the Lead Member for Children's and Adults' Services. The role of the board is to take a strategic approach to behaviour support to schools and to co-ordinate activity.
- 1.3 The Project Board recommended that the establishment of the Behaviour Board should be widely publicised to schools and other key stakeholders and that schools and parents should be made aware of the wide range of activity that is being undertaken in relation to behaviour and identifying the range of support available.

2. Specialist Provision

- 2.1 East Sussex continues to have a high proportion of pupils placed at fee charging special schools. There has been an increase in the numbers of pupils with statements of SEN for an autistic spectrum disorder. In 1999 there were 150 statements for ASD representing 7% of the total; by 2005 this had risen to 348 which is 15% of the total. There is also the increase in statements for behaviour described in paragraph 1.1 above. In order to meet the changing needs of the pupils it is important that the range and scope of the specialist provision maintained by the County Council is kept under review.
- 2.2 The Project Board recommended that consultation is undertaken on the re-designation of St Mary's School, Horam, from a 60 place moderate learning/behaviour difficulties school for pupils aged 11-19 to an 80 place behaviour difficulties school for pupils aged 9-19 with 20 residential spaces. This will remove the need for the high number of pupils with behaviour difficulties to attend fee charging schools. Consultants report that the works needed to the existing building to locate all the residential accommodation into the main school building and upgrade to current standards is estimated at £209,000.
- 2.3 The Project Board also recommended that the role of the special facilities for pupils with dyslexia in Bexhill High School, Hailsham Community College and Seaford Head Community College be reviewed in light of the reduced numbers of pupils requiring such placements.
- 2.4 The Project Board recommended that a plan for the development of additionally resourced facilities attached to mainstream schools for pupils with high functioning autism (Asperger's Syndrome) initially in 6-8 secondary schools be created within current resources. These

facilities would offer specialist provision to 5-6 pupils each and offer outreach services to local mainstream schools. In the longer term consideration should be given to the development of similar facilities within feeder mainstream primary schools.

- 2.5 In addition there is a need to develop plans for a multi-agency co-ordinated approach to services for children with ASD and their families which would form a network of services and provision. This would extend and include services already in existence, eg the ASD facilities in special schools, outreach from special schools, the Language and Learning Support Service, social care services and the Family Intensive Support Service (health) in a co-ordinated way providing a 'one stop shop' for families.

3. Delegation of SEN funds

- 3.1 The consultation report included a proposal that the funds delegated to schools to support pupils with statements of SEN be delegated to LPCs to enable them to take earlier, more effective action to meet pupils' needs with greater flexibility. This would also release centrally held resources such as for the administration of the statutory assessment process, educational psychologists' time and support services' input. There was support for this proposal in the consultation but a number of issues to be addressed were raised including how to ensure equity, the possibility of increasing bureaucracy for schools and ensuring parents' confidence that their child's needs will be met. In light of these issues the Project Board recommended that a considered approach be adopted to this recommendation involving undertaking a 'dry run' in one or more LPCs initially with the view to ironing out potential issues and evaluating the outcomes prior to delegating to a larger number of LPCs in future financial years.

4. Out of School Activities/Family Support for Special School Pupils

- 4.1 In the consultation there was considerable support for the provision of more family support including overnight respite for ASD children and their families and developing a much wider offer of out of school and extended school activities for pupils with SEN and those attending special schools in particular. The Project Board recommended that a costed plan is produced for increased overnight respite provision. The Board also recommended that out of school hours activities should be developed within the special school sector and that work is undertaken with one LPC (including one special school) to develop inclusive provision, as a pilot. The LPC including the South Downs Community Special School has already undertaken some initial planning on this and it is recommended that this should form the pilot for this work.