

Committee: **Scrutiny Committee for Children's Services**

Date: **16 June 2005**

Title: **Special Educational Needs Departmental Review**

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

Purpose: **To inform the Committee of the outcome of the consultation on the SEN Review**

Recommendation:

The Committee is asked to:

- 1. note the outcomes of the consultation on the Review of SEN Specialist Provision (Annex 1);**
- 2. note the actions proposed in the 'Next Steps' booklet (Annex 2) as the basis for the future plans for the review;**
- 3. note the four key priorities arising from the review:**
 - 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 2006/7 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.**
- 4. elect a member of this committee to join the SEN Review Project Board.**

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 reallocating existing resources except the proposed changed use of St Mary's, Horam. Consideration will need to be given through the CAPS process to resourcing this development. Provision has been made by the Cabinet of one-off funding to support the Review in 2005/6. 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 (SEN) in East Sussex took place in the spring term 2005. A report on the outcomes of the consultation is attached as Annex 1. The membership of the Project Board is included in Annex 2.

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 2 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 2006/7, 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.

2.5 The analysis of the consultation responses, the 'Next Steps' booklet and the four main priorities for action were considered by Cabinet on 14th June 2005.

3. Environmental Issues

3.1 The placement of children in specialist provision closer to their homes will reduce the travelling that they undertake and road congestion in the morning and afternoon periods.

4. Community Safety Issues

4.1 Community safety will be improved if all children requiring specialist provision are able to be placed speedily in appropriate schools and the delegation of funds to Local Partnerships for Children will enable local communities to ensure that the needs of all the children who live or go to school in the community are met in a timely fashion and without unnecessary recourse to statutory procedures.

5. Human Rights Issues

5.1 Children's rights to an appropriate education will be enhanced.

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