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To: Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Children, Families & Education Policy Overview Scrutiny Committee

Date: 31 March 2010

Subject: Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Units at Kent Mainstream Schools and Academies and Lead School Programme Pilots

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This paper provides an update on the Review of SEN Units and the timescale for considering options informed by the evaluation of the Lead School Pilots.

1. Background

In 2004 Members agreed the need to review Specialist Unit and Designated provision in mainstream schools in Kent. The principle objective of the Review was to ensure an equitable range and spread of resources and provision for children with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools across the County. A Cabinet paper on 16 October 2006 set out the objectives and strategy of the Review. A Cabinet paper on 13 March 2007 set out in more detail the policy context for the Review and Members agreed the next stages including the consultation process for approving proposals for each area.

Members approved the provision proposals in Phase 1 Pilot areas following a Cabinet paper on the 17 September 2007. It was agreed by Cabinet in early November 2007 that implementation of the Unit Review (Lead school) strategy countywide would be delayed for a year during which time implementation of the Phase 1 proposals would proceed as a pilot. This enabled the Unit Review Steering Group to test out the policy within a limited geographical area and to evaluate the impact and response from schools. A Cabinet paper on 8 February 2008 noted the progress of the Unit Review, agreed changes to the timetable, noted feedback and issues raised by stakeholders during the Phase 2 consultation process and noted the potential capital implications of Phase 2 proposals.

A progress report on the Phase 1 Pilot of the Lead School programme was agreed by Cabinet on 30 March 2009 noting the funding arrangements for the

Pilot phase and agreeing an interim policy statement as a working document to be evaluated during the pilot period. A further progress report on 12 October 2009 provided an update on Lead School provision in Phase 1 pilot areas and set out the cost implications for Lead Schools should the pilot be implemented in Phase 2 areas.

Cabinet noted the progress of the Lead Schools pilot and also progress of the evaluation process. Cabinet also noted the cost implications and the change to the timetable, when Phase 2 schools would receive first year budget subject to the Phase 1 evaluation. Cabinet reports and decisions can be accessed at

<http://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=2479&Ver=4>

2. Next Steps

On 26 January 2010 Children families and Education Strategic Management Team (CFE SMT) received an update report and commissioned a further review. The review is to consider and agree if the Lead pilot as currently constituted continues to be the most appropriate way to respond to children's needs. If so a report will be brought to Members to restate commitment to it and plan roll out across the County. If not officers will plan appropriate alternatives in consultation with Members. Current SEN Unit provision and the number of Lead schools taking part in the pilot is summarised in Annex 1. A workshop is planned for 15 March 2010 with special schools, schools with SEN Units, Lead Schools from Pilot areas and colleagues from CFE and Health to inform this review. Feedback from the inspection of SEN and Disability Services in Kent during the week of 1 March 2010 will also inform the review of the strategy. Further reports will then be considered by CFE SMT to provide information and options for the future.

Recommendations will then be made to Cabinet and Lead Members with a view to a further report to Cabinet in the autumn. In the interim the needs of children will continue to be met in appropriate schools providing parents with confidence in Kent provision and services.

3. Recommendations

Recommendations:

Members of the Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Children, Families and Education Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:

Note:

- a) The needs of children and young people with SEN will continue to be met in appropriate schools and provisions, including schools with SEN Units, providing parents and carers with confidence in Kent provision and services.

- b) The Local Authority will build on existing provision and expertise working with all schools in a locality to increase capacity to meet the SEN of children and young people informed by the lead school pilot..
- c) The current lead school pilot will be evaluated as proposed and further reports made to CFE SMT and Members culminating in a report to Cabinet in the Autumn.

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Background Documents:

Previous Cabinet Papers available at:

<http://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=2479&Ver=4>

Current Unit Provision and Lead School Pilots

The table below provides a summary of the numbers of schools with Special Educational Needs (SEN) Units by phase and need type.

There are 41 schools with SEN Units. There are a further 17 schools with SEN Units taking part in the Lead School Pilot. There are a further 10 schools without SEN Units taking part in the Lead School pilot.

Numbers of SEN Units and Pilot Lead Schools

Count of Unit/LS		Type						Grand Total
Unit/LS	Phase	AUT	HI	PD	SpLD	VI	SLCN	
Lead School	Primary	2		2	1			5
	Secondary	3			1		1	5
Lead School Total		5		2	2		1	10
Unit	Primary	3	3	5		2	5	18
	Secondary	4	3	3	4	5	2	21
	Academy		1			1		2
Unit Total		7	7	8	4	8	7	41
Unit/LS	Primary	1	2	1		2	3	9
	Secondary		1	2	2	1	1	7
	Academy	1						1
Unit/LS Total		2	3	3	2	3	4	17
Grand Total		14	10	13	8	11	12	68

Autism	AUT
Hearing Impairment	HI
Physical Disability	PD
Specific Learning Difficulties	SpLD
Visual Impairment	VI
Speech Language Communication Needs	SLCN