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To: Cabinet – 17 September 2007

Subject: UNIT REVIEW (INCLUDING DESIGNATED AND SPECIALIST PROVISION AND VERY SEVERE AND COMPLEX NEED SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED AT MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS)

Classification: CONFIDENTIAL

Introduction

1. (1) In 2004 Members agreed the need to review Specialist Unit and Designated provision in mainstream schools in Kent. The Cabinet paper on 16 October 2006 set out the objectives and strategy of the Review. The 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.

(2) This report updates Cabinet Members on progress of the key strands of the Review strategy and seeks approval from Cabinet Members on the proposals for Phase One Clusters and the timetable for consultation on proposals for Phase Two Clusters.

Phase One Clusters

2. (1) In Phase One, there are eight Clusters. Proposals for these Clusters formed the basis of a consultation process undertaken during June and July 2007. The majority of responses to the consultation on Phase One proposals, 73% were positive. Stakeholders were particularly supportive of the following elements of the proposals

- the Lead school vision of sharing expertise and resources within a locality
- the concrete proposals for new Lead schools which will reduce travelling distances for children in the future
- the idea of groups of schools working together to make decisions
- the potential within the proposals for influencing the practice of staff in all schools

(2) Reports on the consultation in each Phase One area are attached at Appendix One. Each report includes the list of proposed Lead schools, Feedback from the consultation in the area, Changes or actions proposed as a result of the consultation. During the consultation process common concerns and issues set out below, were identified which will inform the next stages of the Review.

(3) Key themes and outcomes of consultation

Monitoring of provision and resources

The monitoring of Lead Schools and Clusters was a recurrent theme of the consultation. Stakeholders wanted reassurances that the Local Authority would monitor the resources allocated to Lead schools and decisions taken by Clusters. The County Steering Group has set out the arrangements that will be put in place to monitor and evaluate Clusters and Lead schools against agreed criteria which include Pupil Outcomes, Parent/carer satisfaction, Planning and decision-making processes and Efficient and Effective use of Resources. In addition, the Local Authority will require all Clusters and Lead schools to demonstrate conformity with statutory requirements, integrity of decision making, traceability of expenditure and consistency of provision.

Planning for a range of SEN provision in each locality

The Headteachers of Special Schools for children with Profound, Severe and Complex Needs raised specific issues regarding the planning of Lead school outreach support in the context of the wider range of SEN provision. The County Steering Group is clear that Lead schools will offer one part of the full range of SEN provision within each locality alongside other providers like Specialist Teachers, Special Schools and Health services. The Steering group is proposing to work more closely with the Headteachers of Special Schools to ensure that there is a common understanding of the vision for SEN outreach support to mainstream schools in the future. In addition, Guidance to Clusters on the development of Lead schools will be strengthened to emphasise the role of the Special School as a joint partner within the range of SEN provision in each locality

Role and Expectations of Lead schools

Stakeholders put forward valuable suggestions on the kind of services Lead schools could provide. These included awareness training for all school staff and pupils, follow up monitoring of advice provided to schools, joint training and closer working with community groups and parent support groups. Children and young people were particularly concerned that schools address bullying more effectively. The County Steering Group is proposing to strengthen the Expectations of Lead schools for each need type to include suggestions put forward during the consultation. Feedback from the consultation will also be shared with Lead schools and Cluster Boards to inform the planning of provision locally.

Capacity of proposed Lead Schools

There was a positive response from all stakeholders to the vision of what Lead schools for each need type will deliver in the future as set out in the Expectations of Lead Schools. There was concern raised about the capacity within some of the proposed Lead schools to deliver the full range of support from September 2008. In line with Kent County Council's Improvement Strategy for Schools and Settings¹, the County Steering Group will endeavour to ensure that all Lead schools are schools within the top two categories of Outreach schools or General Support Schools as defined by the Advisory Service Kent within the strategy. Where a Lead school is identified in the other categories of Substantial or Intensive support the following is proposed. The Lead school and Cluster Board(s) in consultation with the Principal Advisor, Primary or Secondary will agree a level of provision which ensures that the Lead school delivers on it's responsibilities for individual children within the Cluster(s) but reduces it's outreach role to enable the school to focus on improvement. The County Steering Group is proposing to strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to reflect this.

Communication with parents

¹ Kent County Council Improvement Strategy for Schools and Setting July 2007 – Produced by Advisory Service Kent

During the consultation parents asked questions about the role of the Lead school, the timetable for the development of each Lead school and how their children will access them. Parents were also concerned that they retain the right to choose a provision outside of their area if it is the most appropriate. The Steering Group working with each Cluster or group of Clusters is proposing, from September 2007 to provide regular information to parents on the implementation of Lead school provision in their locality as it develops.

(4) Resource Implications

Revenue

Phase One proposals will be developed within the current Unit and Designation revenue budget

Therapy support for new provision and the potential outreach role implicit in the expectations of all Lead schools will have resource implications for the Health Therapy services. Health colleagues represented on the County Steering group have begun work on mapping existing therapy resources across the County and planning for proposed Lead school provision.

Capital

The following are the capital costs of Phase One proposals

- New Primary Lead school provision for Autism in the Ashford Clusters to include 6-8 specialist placements - £150,000
- Dartford Grammar School – proposed Lead school for Visual Impairment secondary in the North West Kent Clusters – mobile accommodation to locate resource base - £9,000 - £12,000

Additional capital costs of new provision and refurbishment of existing provision is included in either PFI or BSF planning. There are no other capital implications to the Phase One proposals

(5) Staff Implications

The Ashford Clusters have proposed Furley Park primary school as the new Lead school for Physical Disabilities. The current designations for Physical Disabilities in the area are Willsborough Infant and Junior schools. The new proposal will have potential implications for the small number of permanent staff working within the current designation.

As a result of the proposals in North West Kent, staff currently employed directly by Kent County Council at the Nick Hornby Centre in Meopham school will need to be TUPE transferred to the employment of Meopham school which is proposed as a Lead school for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Staff currently employed by Kent County Council at the Hearing Impairment unit at Leigh CTC will need to be TUPE transferred to the employment of the new Leigh Academy which will be commissioned by the Clusters to provide Lead school services in North West Kent

(6) Transition

Transition arrangements proposed for the Review will ensure that children currently accessing specialist support in mainstream schools continue to receive the same level of support for the duration of their education. This means that there will be a lengthy transition period of at least five years during which Lead schools and Clusters with the

support of the Local Authority will plan the development of provision taking account of the staffing and resource implications outlined above.

Once agreed by KCC Cabinet Members, Phase One Clusters will begin work with local service providers and multi-agency partners on the development of detailed implementation plans for each Lead school with the support of the Project manager and specialist CFE staff.

Phase Two Clusters

3. All remaining Clusters are part of Phase Two. Continued progress has been made on Lead school nominations for these areas and a detailed presentation will be made to Cabinet Members in the Autumn prior to a wider consultation in each area. A timetable is attached at Appendix Two.

Funding proposals

4. (1) Proposals for new funding arrangements, which fit with the new structure of provision implicit in the Review strategy, have been developed by a working party established in April. In addition to the relevant CFE officers, the working party included members of the Schools Funding Forums, Headteachers and Teachers in Charge of current units and designations and Local Education Officer representation.

(2) The proposals developed by the group were presented to the Schools Funding Forum on 20th of July and agreed for consultation during the Autumn term 2007. The key elements of the proposed funding formula are

- Formula Funding for provision for children with Physical Disabilities (PD), Autism (ASD), Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN) should be based on percentage of population.
- Formula funding for provision for children with Hearing Impairment (HI) and Visual Impairment (VI) should be based on data held by the Specialist Teaching Service to reflect the variance by area in low incidence needs
- Funding for children with PD medical need and VI & HI high-end support will be removed from the formula and funded on a separate basis, as these very expensive cases cannot be met from the normal formula.
- All lead schools will receive an annual operational sum to reflect organisational and management arrangements
- Protection will be provided for all children in Units or with Very Severe and Complex Need funding until they reach the end of their current phase of schooling. This funding will be paid directly to the school the child is attending
- Specific anomalies identified during the first modeling of the formula for Autism in the North West Kent Clusters will be analysed and resolved in consultation with the Clusters and proposed Lead schools in the area

(3) It is proposed that the new funding arrangements set out above be approved for wider consultation with schools with a view to implementation in September 2008.

Recommendation

5. The Cabinet is requested to:
- (a) NOTE the progress of the Review;
 - (b) APPROVE Phase One proposals (detailed in Appendix Two) for implementation to start in September 2008; and
 - (c) AGREE funding proposals set out at paragraph for consultation in the Autumn term 2007

Nuala Ryder
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Background Papers:

Cabinet Report – Unit Review – 12th of March 2007
Cabinet Report – Unit Review – 16th of October 2006