

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform
Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director, Education, Learning and Skills

To: Cabinet – 15 July 2013

Decision No:

Subject: The Review of the Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Curriculum Provision

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Education Cabinet Committee 21 June 2013

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This report provides Cabinet with an update on the review of Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Alternative Curriculum (AC) Provision together with a summary of the consultation with the wider group of stakeholders on the establishment of 8 new delivery hubs across the County for PRU and AC Provision. This has been a major piece of work to re-organise and improve the provision for young people excluded from school, at risk of exclusion with time out from school and those following an alternative curriculum pathway. It has been closely aligned with and supported by the development of the Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service, so that all these young people are helped to engage in education and training and all will have a positive pathway to age 18, including an apprenticeship or other route into employment. It is designed to have a significant impact on reducing exclusions and the NEET (not in education, employment or training) figures for these vulnerable groups of young people.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to note the consultation responses and approve the changes following the review. Some of the changes are required by recent national policy changes but other outcomes of the review are the re-organisation of existing PRUs into eight new delivery hubs.

1. Introduction

1.1 At a meeting on 19th March the Education Cabinet Committee agreed that a wider stakeholder consultation should be undertaken on the proposal to establish 8 new delivery PRU and Alternative Provision hubs in Kent, following the review of this provision in 2012-13. These proposals, and the background to them, are summarised below.

1.2 The consultation on the new delivery models was published on the Kent County Council website on the April 22nd and closed on June 17th.

2. Background to the PRU and Alternative Curriculum Review

2.1 The Department for Education (DfE) guidance on the statutory duties for the Local Authority and powers concerning Alternative Provision was published on 27 July 2012. This guidance covers:

- education arranged by Local Authorities for learners who are excluded, because of illness or other reasons
- education arranged by schools for learners on a fixed term or permanent exclusion
- learners being directed by schools to off site provision

2.2 Alternative Provision is defined as: *“education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour”*. (DfE Guidance July 2012).

2.3 In parallel with the publication of this Guidance, Kent County Council had undertaken to review the PRUs and AC provision in order to improve the educational offer and outcomes made for young people unable to access mainstream school because they are excluded, or at risk of disengaging from education. The provision was very variable and outcomes for learners had been poor for some time.

2.4 The DfE guidance also stated that funding had to be delegated to newly constituted Management Committees.

- With effect from April 2013, PRU/Alternative Curriculum Management Committees have been established, in effect, as governing bodies (although still known as Management Committees) with full delegated powers. As part of this change in status Management Committees must ensure there is better representation of the communities they serve, and the majority of its members and the schools within it. In practice, this means a membership with the majority being Secondary Headteachers in the locality - especially those who regularly use the services of the provision. This strengthens a key principle of the Kent PRU review which intends to develop high quality *locally* managed solutions for the delivery of PRU and AC provision. Eight new Management Committees have been established.
- Local authorities must make arrangements to delegate funding for Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Alternative Curriculum (AC) provision directly to Management Committees. Although all PRUs and AC provisions have Management Committees currently, they do not have delegated powers over the budget or staff. These new responsibilities of full delegation over the budget and staffing will bring the functions of the new Management Committees in line with the governing bodies of Community schools.

2.5 In addition to these amendments to legislation, specifications were also published on the programme offer. The statutory guidance¹ published in January 2013 identifies *“Good alternative provision”* as:

- academic attainment on a par with mainstream schools –particularly in English, maths and science;

¹ Statutory guidance sets out the Government’s expectations of local authorities and maintained schools who commission alternative provision and pupil referral units. The Government expects those who are not legally required to have regard to the statutory guidance to still use it as a guide to good practice

- addressing the specific personal, social and academic needs of students to help them overcome barriers to attainment;
- improving pupil motivation and self-confidence; supporting re-integration to mainstream education, FE or employment
- the guidance is clear that responsibility for ensuring that any additional provision purchased, such as vocational training, meets these criteria and rests with the commissioner of the provision. In the future the commissioners will be the Management Committees of PRUs and the schools they serve.

3. Kent PRU and Alternative Provision Review

3.1 In order to improve outcomes for learners and address the new DfE statutory provisions, KCC initiated a review of the PRU and Alternative Provision. The review was designed to improve the quality of provision and the outcomes for learners, and achieve a significant reduction in exclusions. The review established how Headteachers in each district or locality wished to achieve the delegation of funding to support the new delivery structures. There were a number of ways delegation could be achieved and therefore the consultation events with schools were held to determine which option each locality wished to follow. From these consultations with Headteachers and PRU/AC managers two options emerged.

- (i) Full delegation to a Lead PRU with a Management Committee with full delegated powers
- (ii) Devolution of funding to schools within a locality and no Management Committee or PRU provision

3.2 The process of delegation or devolution of funding has been subject to two consultations with Headteachers and the Management Committees of PRUs. Significant changes to the formula funding PRUs and schools receive in their budgets will not occur until April 2014, thus allowing a year for transition. By April 2014 all provision will be funded according to the agreed formula based on pupil numbers and deprivation measures, which has been agreed by all Secondary Headteachers.

3.3 In areas where the option is for full devolution to schools, it is likely that all or some parts of the provision will close to be replaced by alternatives agreed by local schools and the Local Authority through a Service Level Agreement. In these areas funding will be devolved directly to schools

4. Financial Implications

New Funding Formula

District	Budget at April 2014 £	Current District Budgets £
Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley	1,908,818	2,184,164
West Kent Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks	1,197,436	1,220,797
Thanet and Dover	2,417,705	2,390,461
Maidstone and Malling	1,469,010	1,206,929

Swale	1,196,262	998,059
Canterbury	980,646	1,133,472
Ashford	909,500	745,515
Shepway	1,142,123	1,179,643
	11,221,500	11,059,040

- 4.1 The new funding formula has been the subject of detailed consultations with Headteachers in meetings in each district, and a working meeting with school business managers. Although there are differences between the formula budget and the existing (historically calculated) budgets, the proposed budgets are evidently more equitably calculated and have the support of schools. Budget allocations incorporate all property running costs both revenue and capital.
- 4.2 Since the entire budget for PRU/AC provision is to be delegated to Management Committees or devolved to groups of schools, it is essential that the Local Authority retains the capacity to ensure that new and existing provision is of the highest quality, particularly since the LA remains accountable for the education of permanently excluded students.
- 4.3 A Partnership Service Level Agreement has been shared with Headteachers and Management Committees which outlines the Local Authority's requirements of any new provision. These requirements include: quality of curriculum; good teaching and learning; improved outcomes for students; safeguarding and Child Protection arrangements; post-16 progression routes to age 18 and regular review periods. This agreement will be signed by the new Management Committees before the 1st September 2013.
5. **Establishment of the 8 delivery hubs and the development of local delivery models.**
- 5.1 Detailed delivery hub discussions took place in January 2013 with Secondary Headteachers across all districts, for the purpose of clarifying their proposals for future provision to meet the needs of young people out of school or at risk of disengaging.
- 5.2 New models have to be able to support delivery of the varied alternative approaches to learning which are required to meet all pupils' needs. The new proposals arising from the review will transform the curriculum offer and will focus on a wider range of options and courses, including a better quality vocational programme including apprenticeships. The review has also resulted in better qualified staff and other workforce developments, and improved multi-agency professional connections and networks to support the work of PRUs. This includes the development of the Kent Integrated Adolescent Support Service. All the new hubs have developed the offer to young people, so that they can access a greater variety of high quality and appropriate local alternative provision.
- 5.3 In order to support improved quality of provision, KCC has worked in partnership with schools to establish an agreed Partnership Service Level Agreement and a clear Quality Assurance tool. These will contribute to the development of a list of quality assured learning providers whom schools can easily access through a newly established procurement framework.

5.4 The 8 delivery hubs are set out below.

District and delivery model	Outcome	Management Committee
Thanet & Dover Lead PRU/ Behaviour service	Delegated funding to Management Committee of combined KS3 & KS4 Lead PRU.	Yes
Dartford & Gravesham Lead PRU/ Behaviour service	Delegated funding to Management Committee of combined KS3 & KS4 Lead PRU.	Yes
West Kent Lead PRU/ Behaviour service	Retain an off-site provision but will seek Academy sponsorship.	Yes
Maidstone & Malling Lead PRU/ Behaviour service	Delegated funding to Management Committee of combined KS3 & KS4 Lead PRU	Yes
Canterbury (separate from Swale) Lead PRU/ Behaviour service	Retain off site provision but will seek Academy sponsorship	Yes
Swale Funding devolved to schools	Funding devolved to schools in the district in order that they may commission their own services/provision	No May commission on an ad hoc basis
Ashford (separate from Shepway) Funding devolved to schools	Funding devolved to four (non-selective) schools in order that they may commission their own services/provision	No Will commission on an ad hoc basis at the Brook KS3 Centre.
Shepway Funding devolved to schools	Funding devolved to schools in order that they may commission their own services/provision	No May commission places at the Brook Centre.

6. Property Implications

- 6.1 The Management Committees of the 8 delivery hubs were asked to identify their future property requirements for each locality. Through this consultation inadequate buildings have been identified and these buildings will be released for disposal. This is the position in Dartford/Gravesham/Barn End/Limes, Swale The Gateway, Ashford Birchwood, Shepway Route 25 and Cheriton Road and Dover Linwood. A summary of the property proposals is attached as Appendix 1.
- 6.2 In two of the new hubs Swale, and Dartford and Gravesham, capital works will be required to provide new accommodation. These include adaptations to the Challenger site to consolidate onto one site, costing £100k. In Dartford and Gravesend, a feasibility study is currently being undertaken to identify new provision and rationalise accommodation. The disposal of The Limes, Barn End and Rowhill School sites will cover the cost of these property requirements through an Invest to Save bid.

7. Outcome of the Consultation

- 7.1 In addition to receiving responses in writing, consultation meetings were held in each of the eight service hubs where PRUs and Alternative Curriculum providers are based.
- 7.2 There have been no objections to the establishment of eight new delivery hubs and no responses were opposed to the proposals. The response has been overwhelmingly supportive of the proposals.
- 7.3 The Education Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 21 June 2013, considered the outcomes of the consultation and endorsed the implementation of the proposals outlined.

8. Next steps

- 8.1 Following Cabinet agreement, a report outlining the proposals for each PRU/AC establishment affected by re-organisation will be sent to the DfE identifying an implementation date as well as changes to Management Committees. We are required to do this as a consequence of re-organising the PRUs so that some are amalgamated and some closed.

9. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s): Cabinet is asked to note the consultation responses and approve the changes following the review. Some of the changes are required by recent national policy changes but other outcomes of the review are the re-organisation of existing PRUs into eight new delivery hubs.

10. Background Documents

- 10.1 Education Cabinet Committee report – 21 June 2013
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s40856/Item%20D4%20Responses%20to%20the%20wider%20consultation%20following%20the%20review%20of%20Pupil%20Referral%20Units%20PRUs%20and%20.pdf>

- 10.2 The public consultation document is available via the following link:
<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/PRUreview/consultationHome>

11. Contact details

Report Author
Sue Dunn
Head of Skills and Employability
01622 694923
Sue.Dunn@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:
Sue Rogers
Director of Education, Quality and Standards
01622 694983
Sue.Rogers@kent.gov.uk