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To: Cabinet – 30 March 2009

Subject: **REVIEW OF SPECIALIST UNIT AND DESIGNATED PROVISION IN
MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS – LEAD SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report seeks agreement on a model of delivery to be evaluated as part of the pilot phase of the Unit Review and provides a general update on the progress of the implementation of Lead School provision

Introduction

1 (1) The implementation of Phase One of the Unit Review commenced in September 2008 in the Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) in Ashford, Shepway, Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley. Local multi-agency task groups have been established to progress the development of each Lead School. The Lead School self-assessment completed in July 2008 has informed the planning process. The Local Authority provided a lump sum of £39,235 to each Lead School. Specialist staff from Advisory Service Kent and the Specialist Teaching Service have provided support and guidance throughout. The development stage has focused on the following:-

- Scoping of training needs and planning workforce development
- Defining outreach services and links with other specialist services
- Planning the use of accommodation
- Placement planning
- Methodology for the monitoring and evaluation of provision

(2) Schools are at varying stages of development with some good examples of the Lead School vision in practice already evident. A second round of self-assessment of Lead Schools in Phase One will be undertaken in April 2009.

Phase Two

2 (1) Phase Two will cover all other Local Children's Services Partnerships. A full and thorough evaluation of Phase One will be completed in advance of the implementation of Phase Two. Proposed Lead schools in the Phase Two areas are being encouraged to focus on the scoping of training needs, planning of workforce development within the school and the partnership area(s) and the planning of accommodation requirements. As a number of the Lead schools within both Phase One and Phase Two required some capital investment for adaptations to accommodation, it has also been emphasized that the current economic climate has had and will continue to have an impact on the availability of funding for capital work within schools. This may have additional implications on the timetable for Lead School implementation.

Evaluation of Pilot Phase

3 (1) A working group has been established to manage the evaluation of the pilot phase, The Evaluation will focus on testing out the key elements of the Review strategy including:-

- The availability of support to mainstream schools in becoming inclusive and accessible in line with the requirements of the DDA
- LCSP planning and decision-making arrangements to ensure an integrated range of specialist provision across the locality including services from Lead Schools, Special Schools, Health, Specialist Teaching Service.
- Access to specialist provision and support for children and young people closer to home.
- Parental confidence and satisfaction with the new model.
- The proposed funding mechanism.

Draft Policy Statement

4 (1) A draft policy statement setting out the proposed model of delivery to be evaluated has been drafted. This is intended as a working document and is subject to review during the period of Phase One Implementation. It will be amended as a result of the evaluation in readiness for Phase Two. It includes:-

- The definition and main functions of the Lead school.
- Duties on Local Authorities and schools in SEN and Disability. Discrimination legislation.
- Criteria for access to the Lead School service.
- Decision-making in accordance with the SEN Code of practice.
- Arrangements for Home to School transport.

The full version is attached at Appendix 1.

Funding

5 (1) In the current financial year (2008-09) a total of £12.9m is allocated to

schools to support pupils placed in units (£9.6m) and for supporting pupils with very severe and complex needs in other schools (£3.3m). This total budget will be reinvested in a new network of Lead Schools – most of the existing schools with units, plus new Lead schools – over the two phases of the implementation. Lead schools will be funded via a new formula that allocates this entire budget.

(2) The Schools Funding Forum (SFF) considered proposals for a new formula in November and agreed the following funding arrangements to be implemented for Phase One Lead Schools from April 2009. The SFF agreed the proposals on the condition that a thorough evaluation of Phase One is undertaken prior to countywide implementation of the Lead School policy.

(3) The new funding formula for each lead school is based on a lump sum plus an allowance that reflects the total number of all pupils in the area that each Lead School is 'responsible' for in terms of its area of SEN expertise. The major element of the formula reflects the specific need type supported and the different average costs of supporting those need types. Finally, because this is a new funding model being phased in to replace the previous unit model, transitional funding adjustments are being made to ensure schools do not face inappropriate changes in their funding levels. It is planned that schools will move gradually onto the new formula over a three year transition period.

(4) The proposed new funding formula for Lead Schools and a key element of the Unit Review strategy includes new arrangements for Very Severe and Complex Need (VSCN) funding. Lead Schools in Phase One will be funded by formula through the distribution of the combined budgets. The transitional arrangements ensure that schools continue to receive VSCN funding for existing pupils until they either move school or leave education. Lead schools in Phase One will support new pupils with VSCN.

Timetable

6.

PHASE ONE – PILOT	
Pilot Schools receive setting up allowance	September 2008
Pilot schools receive first year budgets	September 2009
Evaluation of pilot starts	Summer 2010
Evaluation report presented to KCC Cabinet	Autumn 2010
PHASE TWO	
Proposals for Phase 2 to KCC Cabinet, subject to response to evaluation report	Autumn 2010
Phase 2 schools receive setting up funds	Late Autumn 2010

Phase 2 schools receive first year budgets	April 2011
Pilot schools fully implemented	April 2012
Phase 2 fully implemented	April 2014

Recommendations

7. It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Note the progress of the Unit Review.
- b) Note the timetable detailed at paragraph 6.
- c) Note the funding arrangements for the pilot phase.
- d) Agree the draft policy statement as a working document to be evaluated during the pilot period, attached at Appendix A.

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