

ADDITIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY

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| Cabinet Member | Councillor David Simmonds |
| Cabinet Portfolio | Deputy Leader of the Council Education and Children's Services |
| Officer Contact | Jackie Wright, Adult Social Care / Children's & Young People's Venetia Rogers, Residents Services |
| Papers with report | Additional Needs Strategy: <i>Developing Local Provision for Children and Young People with Additional Needs in Hillingdon</i> |

HEADLINE INFORMATION

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| Purpose of report | The report sets out a strategy to develop local educational provision to meet the predicted needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and avoid out of area placements. |
| Contribution to our plans and strategies | Putting our Residents First: Our People; Our Built Environment; Financial Management This report contributes to the School Place Planning Strategy, the Accessibility Strategy for Schools and the Council's Special Educational Needs Policy. |
| Financial Cost | This report does not in itself recommend any commitment to any financial cost to the Council. The strategy recommends further detailed work is undertaken to identify options to meet predicted need and costs will be worked up at that stage. The revenue cost of any new provision would be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for specialist placements. Where Home to School Transport costs arise, these will be met from the Council's base budget. |
| Relevant Policy Overview Committee | Children, Young People and Learning. |
| Ward(s) affected | All. |

RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet approves the Additional Needs Strategy.

INFORMATION

Reasons for recommendation

The overall number of pupils with additional needs will increase over the next 5 years based on the increasing pupil population. Existing education provision is full. The Council has a higher than average number of pupils placed in out of Borough schools increasing the costs to the schools budget and core budgets. Whilst a special free school is opening in January and there is a policy to open specialist resourced provision (SRPs) at new schools or rebuilds wherever possible, it is clear from the data that there remain significant gaps in the local provision. The Council responsibility for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has increased to include those up to age 25 and through the all age Disability Service there is scope to focus on enabling people with SEND to live at home and be educated as close to home as possible throughout their lives. This will have a positive impact on outcomes for residents and provide greater value for money.

Alternative options considered / risk management

The Additional Needs Strategy sets out gaps in local provision and if approved will lead to detailed options being explored to address these gaps.

Comments of Policy Overview Committee(s)

The Children's & Young People's Policy Overview Committee has been monitoring the issues outlined in this report, aware of the change in legislation and the focus on creating local provision for residents. The Committee may consider this as a potential review topic in 2015.

Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 There is a significant increase in the school age population in the Borough estimated at 11.8% over a 5 year period and a corresponding increase in the number of pupils with SEND requiring specialist provision. In January 2014 there were 1503 Hillingdon pupils with statements of special educational needs in the Borough and this is predicted to rise to 1680 by 2020. The implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 is also likely to have an impact on these figures as the age range increases from 2 – 19 to 0 – 25. There has also been a change in the profile of need over the last few years with a significant rise in the number of children being diagnosed with autism and children with profound and multiple learning difficulties living for longer. This has been reported previously to Cabinet linked to updates on school places planning.
- 1.2 In recognition of the rising numbers of pupils with SEND, in 2012 the Council supported two special free school applications. One of these was successful and will open in January 2015. The Cabinet also approved in principle that all new schools should include a specialist resourced provision (SRP) and three SRPs are due to open in 2015. This new provision will assist with meeting the rising needs but gaps remain and there are also approximately 143 pupils educated in independent or non-maintained schools, the majority being placed out of the Borough.

2. Forecast Need

- 2.1 In January 2014 there were 1,503 pupils with a statement of SEN and 427 of these had a primary need of autism. The current state funded special schools for pupils with learning difficulties in the Borough are all over capacity and numbers have risen significantly since January 2014.
- 2.2 Based on the current predicted increase in population, there are likely to be an additional 180 pupils with statements or Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans by 2020. It is acknowledged that there are probably too many pupils with statements in the Borough based on benchmarking data (2.9% of school population in Hillingdon against a national average of 1.85%), but it is the pupils with the lowest level of additional need who should have their needs met in mainstream schools from existing school resources. Therefore this will not have a significant impact on the need for additional specialist provision.
- 2.3 The Additional Needs Strategy sets out more detailed local data and national benchmarking.

3. Overview

- 3.1 The Additional Needs Strategy aims to set out priorities and proposals to develop local educational provision to meet the predicted needs of children and young people (CYP) living in the Borough. It builds on work undertaken over a number of years in developing Specialist Resourced Provision (SRPs) in mainstream schools. The aim is to enable as many CYP as possible to have their needs met in a local school and avoid them having to travel long distances. The Strategy aims to set out a framework and overview for this development from 2014 to 2020.
- 3.2 The Strategy sets out a proposal to draw up detailed plans to:
 - a) address the shortage of special school places generally and those for pupils with autism and consider all age approaches where possible;
 - b) ensure pupils with the lowest level of need are included in mainstream schools without the need for a statement or EHC Plan i.e. supported from existing school funding;
 - c) address the rising number of pupils at Key Stage 1 exhibiting behaviours that can be challenging through early intervention where possible;
 - d) review the pathway for young people aged 16 to 25 to ensure a real focus on preparing for adulthood including employment and local options;
 - e) address the current bulge year of pupils in year 6 with profound hearing impairments at they move to secondary school in September 2015; options are currently being explored;
 - f) analyse the impact of the new special free school and SRPs in future planning;
 - g) undertake more detailed geographical analysis to reduce the need for home to school transport;
 - h) investigate the data in relation to pupils with physical disabilities in more detail and draw up plans to meet the identified needs in the right areas of the Borough;
 - i) create opportunities for more detailed assessment places enabling greater early intervention and reducing reliance on EHC Plans, including those with speech, language and communication needs;
 - j) work with the local independent and non-maintained schools with the aim of filling identified gaps in local provision and ensuring good outcomes;

- k) improve the process for children with significant needs moving in to the Borough to avoid them being out of school;
- l) review the outreach provision required to avoid home and school breakdowns;
- m) design and implement a banded funding model for high needs top up funding (DSG) to support inclusion of pupils with the most complex needs;
- n) update criteria for admission to the SRPs and develop a service level agreement with each school;
- o) support the wider school place planning process.

Financial Implications

This report and Strategy in themselves do not have any direct financial implications. However, once proposals are drawn up there are likely to be financial implications for each and every project, which will require both revenue and capital funding. In terms of revenue funding, the cost of placements will be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), with the cost of Home to School Transport being met from the Council's base budget. It seems likely therefore that new buildings works would be required, elements of which would be contained within the existing schools expansion capital programme as SRP provision is to be provided within the current programme. However, any further requirements would depend upon an agreed funding strategy.

As with any new school building, there is no guarantee that all of the places created will be taken up by Hillingdon children, although in general, the use of special school and SRP places in Hillingdon is predominantly Hillingdon children.

The delivery of educational provision is funded through the DSG. The development of local provision will provide an opportunity to reduce the number of children placed out of borough in much higher cost placements, which over time will release funding back into the general DSG funding block and by implication potentially increase the amount of funding delegated to schools.

The cost of Home to School Transport is funded from the Council's base budget. The development of local provision will also provide opportunities to reduce the cost of Home to School Transport, which will contribute to making the best use of existing resources for local residents.

Specific details for these costs or savings will be considered as part of the options appraisals for individual developments as they arise.

EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES

What will be the effect of the recommendation?

The aim of the Additional Needs Strategy is to provide local good quality education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) enabling them to remain living at home and educated as close to home as possible so avoiding extensive travelling or need for residential provision.

This will have a positive impact on keeping children and young people with SEND safe and will improve their health and well-being. The current children and young people with statements or

EHC Plans and their families will benefit from this Strategy although there will be more impact on the younger age groups.

This Strategy will also have a positive impact on the environment by reducing the home to school transport requirement. With higher numbers of young people remaining in local provision this will have a benefit, albeit small, on local businesses.

The strategy will also reduce the need for staff to visit and review provision for children and young people. It will also support greater partnership with residents as there will be an improved local offer for families. Providing a greater range of local provision will also provide better value for money for the DSG and core budgets. The cost of provision out of the Borough and in the independent and non-maintained sector is generally more expensive for equivalent provision and also incurs additional transport costs.

Consultation Carried Out or Required

The Additional Needs Strategy was drawn up through a task and finish group with schools and has been sent to all schools for consultation. This includes the three independent and non-maintained special schools within the Borough boundary. The Strategy has also been shared with the Parents Forum. Positive feedback was received from schools offering to work in partnership with the Council to implement elements of the Strategy. Internal consultation has included those with responsibility for planning school places, Finance, and members of the Disability Service.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Finance

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and notes that while the adoption of the Additional Needs Strategy has no direct cost implications, funding for the wide ranging financial implications of specific projects will need to be captured through an agreed budget strategy. In addition to benefits for SEND children and their families, the approach of keeping children closer to home is expected to impact favourably on the Council's cost base for both education placements and transport, potentially providing resource for reinvestment in services.

Legal

Pursuant to section 14 of the Education Act 1996 the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available in its area for providing primary, secondary and special education. Under the Council's Constitution, the Cabinet Member has the appropriate powers to agree the recommendations proposed in the report and that there are no other significant legal implications arising out of this report to bring to the Cabinet Member's attention.

Corporate Property

Corporate Property will be consulted as necessary in the development of more detailed action plans subject to approval of this Strategy.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL