

OUTCOME OF THE PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON THE CLOSURE OF THE SPECIALIST RESOURCE PROVISION AT COTEFORD INFANT SCHOOL – NOVEMBER 2024

Committee name	Children, Families & Education Select Committee
Officer reporting	Abi Preston – Director of Education & SEND
Papers with report	<u>Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools.</u> <u>Area guidelines and net capacity - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> Appendix 1 – Letter to school outlining reasons for SRP closure – Sept 2024 Appendix 2 – Coteford Infant – Closure of SRP process Appendix 3 – Coteford Infant – Text for school webpage Appendix 4 – Coteford Infant – Closing an SRP FAQs – Aug 24 Appendix 5 – Letter to all parents outlining reasons for SRP closure 18.09.24 Appendix 6 – Public Notice Coteford Infant Appendix 7 – Consultation Proposal – Coteford Infant – Proposal for SRP removal
Ward	Eastcote, All

HEADLINES

School place planning is a statutory function of the Council as a Local Education Authority (LEA) and involves liaison with all schools and Trusts in the borough, and with neighbouring Local Authorities. The duty is to have a sufficiency of school places to meet parent demand across the borough for all children, including those with Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND).

There is an expectation that all schools are inclusive with all children having their needs assessed, and the appropriate funding provided to the relevant school to enable them to meet those needs. Over the last few years there has been a decline in the demand for commissioned places at the Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) for children with Physical Disabilities (PD) at Coteford Infant School and Officers followed the statutory process to consult to close the SRP.

The closure of the SRP will not impact the support provided by the school for children as outlined in their Education, Health, and Care, Plan (EHCP), and the school will continue to receive the same level of funding for those pupils currently on roll at the SRP until they leave the school.

This proposal is only to close the SRP at Coteford Infants at the end of the academic year 2024 / 25, and does not affect the mainstream school, which will continue to support children with a wide range of needs and abilities. The school will continue to offer education to the local community, and any parent/ family will still be able to express a preference for their child to attend Coteford Infants which will be assessed against the school's admissions criteria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Children, Families and Education Select Committee:

- 1) Review the proposed closure of the Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) for children with Physical Disabilities (PD) at Coteford Infant School detailed in the report;**
- 2) Note the consultation in response to the proposed closure; and**
- 3) Submit any comments to Cabinet, or delegate comments to the Democratic Services Officer in conjunction with the Chair, and in consultation with the Opposition Lead**

Note: Cabinet will be making a decision on this matter at its meeting on 12 December 2024

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Coteford Infant School is a community-maintained school, rated 'Good' by Ofsted, which until August 2024, was a 3 Form Entry (FE) school. At the request of the school due to a declining roll, a consultation to reduce the PAN was conducted by the Local Authority (LA) as the Admissions Authority for the school, in the period during the Autumn term 2022, between 24th October and 19th December 2022. The result of the consultation was to reduce the admission number to 2FE, with Cabinet approving the proposal in February 2023.

Coteford Infant School historically has had an SRP for children with PD for up to 10 commissioned places although it is not based on a typical SRP model. Following the Cabinet decision in February 2023, the school approached the Council to request the commissioned places for the SRP to be reduced to 7 pupils taking into consideration the PAN reduction, which was approved to take effect from September 2024. This was agreed by the Council due to the declining demand for places.

Ordinarily, SRPs operate in a separate classroom or bespoke area within the school and there is a teacher assigned to the provision to oversee and deliver the curriculum to the children according to their needs. *"In SRPs pupils spend most of their time (usually well over 50% of their timetable) in mainstream classes. They only attend the SRP facilities for individual support, to learn a specific skill (for example braille for VI pupils), to receive medical or therapeutic support (for PD pupils) or to access specialist equipment."* (Building bulletin 104, Dec 2015). Coteford Infant School has an alternative set up where there is no separate physical space where the children are taught, as they are fully integrated into mainstream classes for their entire timetable.

Conversations have been ongoing with the school since the end of last year to understand the demand and provision available for pupils with physical disabilities, and the Council continues to work closely with the school regarding the consultation process.

Sufficiency of Places

Officers continue to review the sufficiency of high-quality specialist provision, in both mainstream and special school settings, to meet the future needs of children and young people with SEND in Hillingdon. This is underpinned by the [Hillingdon Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-28 - Hillingdon Council](#) with clearly defined ambitions:

- *Ambition 1: The right support, at the right time, in the right place*
- *Ambition 2: Fully inclusive education for all*
- *Ambition 3: Provision meets the needs of Hillingdon's children and young people*
- *Ambition 4: Children and young people live happy and fulfilled lives where they are included in the community*
- *Ambition 5: There is a flexible offer and range of interventions available for children to access Alternative Provision*

As a result of the ongoing review, it has been identified that there is a greater demand for specialist provision for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), and the Council has increased the provision available in SRPs and Designated Units (DUs) by 72 places, with new settings opening during the last 12 months.

The Council is also working with more schools across the Borough to further increase the number of places available for secondary aged pupils with ASC where there is still a high demand, which will allow more pupils to be educated in their local community with the appropriate support.



The ambitions within the new strategy highlight the importance of ensuring that we create provision that meets the needs of Hillingdon's children and young people and enables them to receive excellent education in their local community.

As part of the ongoing review of all school places within the Council, maintained and specialist provision, it was noted that over the last few years there had been a decline in the demand for places on roll at the PD SRP (i.e. Physical Disability as the primary need) as detailed in the table below. This is in line with the expectation that children with physical disabilities should be able to have their needs met in any mainstream school with reasonable adjustments.

As of September 2024, there are only 3 pupils on roll at the SRP with one pupil in Year 2 moving out of the school at the end of this academic year. This will leave only 2 pupils on roll at the SRP at Coteford Infants in September 2025.

				Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Jan-23	Jan-24
School	Phase	Provision Type	Designated Need	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
Coteford Infant School	Primary	SRP	PD	7	7	4	4	4

The reduced demand is also evident nationally as you will see from the table below, where the number of SRP or DU provision for children or young people with Physical Disability as their primary need has reduced by 37% over the last 4 years. It also shows that there has been a 22% reduction in the number of Councils with an SRP or DU supporting children with PD as their primary need from 58 to 45.

Description	2020 Total	2024 Total	Difference	Difference %
Number of Councils with a Specialist SRP or DU with PD as Primary need	58	45	-13	-22%
Number of Settings with a Specialist SRP or DU with PD as Primary need	110	69	-41	-37%

Data above obtained from Get Information About Schools (GIAS) 'Establishment Fields' on 28th October 2024

Many specialist settings support children and young people with a range of needs, and many children and young people have more than one need, dependent on their disability. For example, people with cerebral palsy may have minor or very complex symptoms, and this may or may not affect their physical, cognitive, and communication abilities. Therefore, children and young people with this condition may have different primary needs, based on the most relevant need at the time of the assessment, which may also change over time.

Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment was considered, however, as the children on roll at the SRP will continue to receive the same level of provision as outlined in their EHCP, and the school will receive the same level of funding, there is not expected to be any impact on these children from the closure of the SRP. Also, unlike a traditional SRP, children on roll at the SRP at Coteford Infant's already spend the entire school day in mainstream lessons, and the school is, therefore, already supporting an inclusive education model for all pupils.

Therefore, there will not be any impact on the children currently on roll at the SRP as there will be:

- No change to the support outlined in the child's EHCP
- No change in the equipment provided
- No change in the level of funding provided to the school as a result of this proposal, as it will remain as it is for each pupil, as detailed their individual EHCP

Financial Implications

Funding will remain the same for all pupils on roll at the SRP at Coteford Infant school, and no funding for these pupils will be withdrawn as a result of this proposal.

Coteford Infants are in an improving deficit position and officers are working with the school to support recovery towards a balanced budget. The Council finance and operational teams will continue to work with and support the school during this process.

RESIDENT BENEFIT & CONSULTATION

Taking into account that there is no longer a statutory 'pre-publication' consultation period for proposed prescribed alteration changes, it should be noted as part of the Council's commitment to meeting the needs of our children and young people and providing sufficient places at appropriate education settings, we continue to review the existing specialist provision in Hillingdon, to ensure we are able to meet the demand for places.

As part of the ongoing sufficiency review, officers have been liaising with the school for a number of months, including a discussion in February 2024 to understand how the space for the SRP was used. It was confirmed that the children on roll at the SRP are based in mainstream classes and fully integrated with mainstream peers. The school did not have a "unit" or separate area for them unlike a traditional SRP. Conversations continued with Coteford Infant School in June and July 2024 to discuss the needs of the children currently attending the provision and the level of support being provided as well as the proposal of removing the SRP.

During this time Coteford Infant school was offered the opportunity to consider hosting an alternative SRP or DU if the current PD SRP was closed, but the school declined the offer as they do not have any available space, and did not want to have any alternate specialist provision on site.

Following the summer break another meeting was held with the school in September 2024 to confirm the proposal would progress with the understanding that information including FAQs, and the consultation process would be shared via the school with stakeholders ahead of the formal consultation.

Information about the consultation was shared by Officers with the school to add to their school's webpage prior to the consultation beginning:

- 13th September 2024 - a letter to the school outlining reasons for the proposed SRP closure (**Appendix 1**), a letter outlining the process of closing an SRP (**Appendix 2**), text for the school's webpage (**Appendix 3**) and FAQs about closing an SRP (**Appendix 4**),
- 18th September 2024 - a letter for all the school community (**Appendix 5**)
- 23rd September 2024 a link to the London Borough of Hillingdon consultation webpage was shared

Formal consultation on the proposal to close the Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) for Physical Disabilities (PD) at Coteford Infant School started on 25th September at 9am and ended on 25th October 2024 at 5pm. Public Notice of the proposal is set out in **Appendix 6** and the full proposal consulted on in **Appendix 7**. The Public Notice was published in the Gazette on the 25th of September and copies were put up surrounding the school site for the start of the consultation.

Statutory process

The prescribed alterations require a minimum of a 4-week consultation period. The formal consultation was designed to ensure that the following received notification of the consultation, in line with the guidance "Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools":

- the governing body/local authority (as appropriate);

- the parents of every registered pupil at the school – where the school is a special school;
- if it involves or is likely to affect a school which has been designated as having a religious character:
 - the Diocesan Boards of Education for any diocese of the CofE any part of which is comprised in the area of the local authority;
 - the bishop(s) of a diocese of the RC Church any part of which is comprised in the area of the local authority; or
 - the relevant faith group in relation to the school; and
- any other body or person that the proposer thinks is appropriate e.g., any affected educational institutions in the area, or neighbouring local authorities.

Proposals affecting a special school should go to any Council that has commissioned a place at the school (i.e., all relevant authorities who have made an out of county/borough placement there).

The consultation document was available from Wednesday 25th September 9am to Friday 25th October 2024 5pm on the consultation page of the Hillingdon Council website. This included a brief outline of the proposed change, the full proposal, and a questionnaire to obtain feedback in direct response to each proposal.

Information regarding the consultation was publicised to all the schools within the Borough via email.

As Hillingdon Council also receives school place applications from residents who live outside of the Borough, the consultation was designed to be inclusive. Therefore, officers contacted the following surrounding Councils to share details of the consultation:

- London Borough of Ealing
- London Borough of Hounslow
- London Borough of Brent
- London Borough of Harrow
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Slough Borough Council

The details of the proposal were also shared with the Hillingdon Parent Carer Forum.

The 3 families affected by the proposal who have children in the PD SRP were informed and consulted prior to the publication of the consultation, and officers have continued to speak with families during this process.

A virtual Question and Answer session with Officers took place on 2nd October 2024 from 5pm to 6pm for stakeholders to have the opportunity to ask questions about the proposal. There was one attendee whose views are included in the themes below.

There was also a drop-in session at the school where Officers were on hand to answer any questions in person and to explain the proposal as necessary. This was held on 4th October 2024, 2:30 to 3:30pm for stakeholders, including parents/guardians, school staff and residents. The intention was to meet with school staff separately from 3.30pm but the original session continued with all stakeholders until 4:50pm with 17 attendees; the majority of whom were staff. The views of attendees are included in the themes below.

Consultation Responses

292 responses were received in total during the consultation period with 290 submitted via the online questionnaire, and 2 further responses were received by email in support of keeping the SRP open. The responses are summarised below.

Online Questionnaire responses are summarised below:

1. **8** respondents agreed with the proposal to close the Physical Disabilities (PD) SRP provision at Coteford Infant School?
 - Yes - 8
 - No - 280
 - Don't know – 2
2. Of the **282** respondents that answered 'No' or 'Don't know', reasons have been summarised below in the paper
3. **10** respondents agreed that the proposed changes will not disadvantage any Hillingdon residents.
 - Yes - 277
 - No - 10
 - Don't know – 3
4. Of the **277** respondents that agreed that the changes will disadvantage Hillingdon residents' reasons have been summarised below in the paper.
5. **290** respondents have confirmed their interest in the proposal as:
 - A parent/ Carer/guardian – 96
 - A staff member – 17
 - A local resident – 108
 - Other – 45
 - Prefer not to say – 13
 - Blank - 11
6. **178** respondents stated that they have children under the age of 18 living in their household.
7. Respondents were invited to state which school(s) their child(ren) currently attend, and the responses were as follows:
 - Coteford Infant School - 30
 - Coteford Junior School – 20
 - Coteford (non-specified) - 17
 - Bishop Ramsey Church of England School – 4
 - Bishop Winnington-Ingram CofE School – 1
 - Deanesfield Primary School – 2
 - Field End Infant School – 1
 - Glebe Primary School – 3
 - Grangewood School – 2
 - Harefield Junior School – 1
 - Harefield Academy – 3
 - Harlyn Primary School – 3

- Haydon School – 8
- Home Educated – 1
- Meadow High School – 4
- Newnham Infant School – 2
- Newnham Junior School – 1
- Newnham (non-specified) - 4
- Northwood School – 3
- Oak Wood School – 2
- Out of borough school – 17
- Pentland School – 1
- Queensmead School – 4
- Ruislip Gardens Primary School – 1
- Sacred Heart Primary School – 4
- Special School (non-specified) - 1
- The Willows School – 1
- Vyners School – 1
- Warrender Primary School – 3
- Whitehall Junior School – 1
- Whitehall (non-specified) - 1
- Whiteheath Infant School – 10
- Whiteheath Junior School – 2
- Whiteheath (non-specified) – 4
- No school recorded - 17

8. Additional comments from the questionnaire have been summarised in the paper below. Please see themes of consultation responses below:

It is important to note that many responses to the consultation did not specifically relate to the proposed closure of the SRP at Coteford Infants, but were in relation to wider funding, or education challenges. The information below seeks to set out the themes from the consultation which proposes to close the SRP at Coteford Infants. However, the mainstream school is not expected to be affected by this proposed closure and will continue to operate as an inclusive school for children with all levels of needs and abilities.

1. Impact on Children with Disabilities:

Many respondents emphasized that children with physical disabilities and special educational needs (SEN) rely heavily on the SRP for specialised support, therapies, and equipment that mainstream schools cannot adequately provide.

The expectation is that children with physical disabilities should be able to have their needs met in any mainstream school with reasonable adjustments based on parental preference. The school currently have only 3 pupils on roll at the SRP, reducing to 2 from September 2025, and 0 from September 2026 currently.

As the level of funding available for each child will not change as a result of this proposal, the school have the choice whether to retain their current therapists, or to opt for a therapy service available to all other mainstream schools across Hillingdon, which is commissioned jointly between the Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB), for the children on roll at the SRP. This jointly commissioned therapy service already supports children with an EHCP attending Coteford Infants who are in mainstream classes.

All therapy services delivered through the jointly commissioned service are delivered in a school setting in Hillingdon, unless a family requests the therapy to be delivered in a clinic as an exception. Therefore, regardless of the decision of the school, therapy will continue to be delivered at the school for any children who are currently on roll at the SRP. This is the current situation for all children accessing therapy across all Hillingdon mainstream schools, including children in Coteford Infants.

Concerns were raised about the negative impact on these children's education, physical development, and overall well-being if the SRP is closed.

The children on roll at the SRP are based in mainstream classes and fully integrated with mainstream peers. The support for each child will remain as outlined in the child's individual EHCP and no support or funding is being removed as a result of this proposal.

Lack of Alternative Provisions:

Respondents highlighted the absence of similar provisions in the area, meaning that closing the SRP would leave a significant gap in support for children with disabilities.

The expectation is that children with physical disabilities should be able to have their needs met in any mainstream school with reasonable adjustments and the provision in Section F of their EHCP being implemented. Increasingly parents want their children to be able to attend their local school with their siblings and children within their community with whom they can make friendships.

The potential increase in travel time and costs for families seeking alternative provisions outside the borough was also a major concern.

The expectation is that children with physical disabilities should be able to have their needs met in any mainstream school with reasonable adjustments based on parental preference. Any children whose needs are assessed to be significantly higher, or with a range of complex needs will be able to access a local special school, and there is a home to school travel policy available to support families ([School transport for children and young people with SEND - Hillingdon Council](#)).

2. Strain on Mainstream Schools:

There were worries that mainstream schools are already underfunded and overstretched, and integrating SRP students without additional resources would further strain teachers and staff.

The children on roll at the SRP are currently based in mainstream classes full time at Coteford Infants, and fully integrated with mainstream peers. The support for each child will remain as outlined in the child's individual EHCP. Each child will have a level of funding that matches their assessed needs which will be provided to the relevant school, so the child can receive the appropriate level of support to meet their needs.

3. Historical Success and Community Trust:

The SRP at Coteford has a long history of success and is highly regarded within the community. Many respondents mentioned the trust and confidence they have in the school's ability to support children with disabilities.

Coteford Infants are a good example of an inclusive school, and they have a model of resources and support which the Council are not proposing to remove. The support outlined in the pupils' EHCP will continue, and we would expect the school to share its model of inclusive practice with other schools across the Borough supporting more children and young people.

The SRP's closure is seen as a loss of a valuable and trusted resource that has benefited many families over the years.

The children on roll at the SRP are based in mainstream classes and fully integrated with mainstream peers. The support for each child will remain as outlined in the child's individual EHCP and we are not expecting any reduction in pupil funding as a result of this proposal. Parents will still be able to access the school through the school admissions process as they do currently, so there is not any change expected.

The staff currently employed by Coteford Infants are a valuable resource for the school and the wider community and will continue to support children across the school. As children on roll at the SRP are included in mainstream lessons all the time, there will not be any impact on staff from the proposed closure of the SRP, especially due to the low numbers of children on roll at the SRP compared to the overall pupils in the school (1.4%).

Headteachers and SENCOs across all schools meet on a regular basis to share best practice, and look for opportunities to work collaboratively, which provides plenty of scope to share learning and ideas to improve the experience of all children in Hillingdon schools.

4. Inclusive Education Benefits:

Several respondents pointed out the benefits of inclusive education, where children with and without disabilities learn together. This fosters understanding, empathy, and social integration among all students.

The children on roll at the SRP are based in mainstream classes and fully integrated with mainstream peers. The support for each child will remain as outlined in the child's individual EHCP. Other families that choose to access other mainstream schools also benefit from this model of education where all children are included regardless of any additional needs they may have and learn together with their peers.

This proposal is only to close the SRP at Coteford Infants, and does not affect the mainstream school, which will continue to support children with a wide range of needs and abilities. The school will continue to offer education to the local community, and any parent / family will still be able to express a preference for their child to attend Coteford Infants which will be assessed against the school's admissions criteria.

It is the expectation of the Council that all schools will offer inclusive education as outlined in the [Hillingdon Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2023-28 - Hillingdon Council](#). Although there were high numbers of objections to the closure of the SRP through the consultation, many people commented that children with a physical disability should be able to learn alongside their peers without a physical disability which would benefit all pupils. Inclusion is a key driver for the proposed decision to close the PD SRP at Coteford Infants and enable all children and young people with a physical disability to be able to learn alongside their peers, regardless of any additional needs they all may have.

5. Concerns about Consultation Process:

Some respondents expressed skepticism about the consultation process, feeling that the decision to close the SRP had already been made and that the consultation was merely a formality.

The Council are following statutory process as per the guidance “Making significant changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to maintained schools.” As part of the review of specialist provision across the Borough, there were a number of discussions with this school and other schools before the consultation process started in line with best practice, to understand what proposals to put forward, based on evidence.

6. Advocacy for More Funding:

Many called for increased funding and resources for the SRP rather than its closure, arguing that investment in such provisions is crucial for the well-being and development of children with disabilities.

The expectation is that children with physical disabilities should be able to have their needs met in any mainstream school with reasonable adjustments based on parental preference. The core funding the Council receives from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is shared across all schools to meet the needs of all pupils fairly, and this process is overseen by the Schools Forum.

Each child will have their needs assessed through a thorough multi-agency process that results in the provision of an EHCP as relevant, whether they require a specialist provision or a mainstream school. This assessment will outline the support required to meet the needs of each child and there will be an appropriate level of funding provided to schools based on this assessment.

Schools are funded for delivering the provision outlined in their EHCP. If needs change over time, schools can request for a review. This may require a re-assessment of the needs of the child and will be considered on an individual basis. This is to ensure that children and young people have the appropriate support to meet any changing needs, or exceptional circumstances.

7. Travel implications

A number of responses included reference to travel implications for families as a result of the closure of the SRP or related to children who attend the mainstream school.

It is not expected that any children will leave the school. The children in the SRP will not be affected as the funding and support will remain the same as a result of this proposal, and there will therefore not be any need for them to move school. As the proposed closure only relates to the SRP, the children in the mainstream school will not be affected and therefore there will not be any implication on travel as nothing will change.

Below is a table showing the distance that current pupils live from the school for reference.

Distance	Number of pupils
Up to 1 mile	168
Over 1 mile to 2 miles	22
Over 2 miles to 5 miles	30
Over 5 miles	1

As you can see, the vast majority of children of the 221 children currently attending the school live within 2 miles of the school (86%), with the rest of the pupils living within 5 miles, apart from 1 child who is living just over 5 miles from the school. All 3 children on roll at the SRP live between 2 and 5 miles from the school.

Petitions

During the consultation period, the Council received 2 petitions which were started by the 'Friends of Coteford', which are also being considered as part of this consultation, as permitted by the Council's Petition Scheme. One petition is in relation to the closure of the PD SRP at Coteford Infants (a), and the other is in relation to admission to the PD SRP of an individual child (b).

(a) Closure of the Coteford PD SRP petition

A petition was received by the Council with a total of 1531 signatories before the end of the consultation (including 22 duplicate signatories), 1091 of these were London Borough of Hillingdon residents (71% of signatories). The details of the petition are below:

'This petition "is to express the dissatisfaction of the LA's proposal to close the SRP unit at Coteford Infant School by the parents and local residents. We would like the Local Authority to reconsider the closure of the SRP unit and to consider the implications this will have on all children who attend the school. We would like the Local Authority to consider the eligibility criteria for children to be accepted into the Coteford Infant School SRP, to properly assess the demand for the SRP unit and to ensure the correct levels of funding are provided for a school where 23% of pupils have are on the SEND register, 6.5% have an EHCP which 2x higher than the national average, to ensure the SRP unit is able to function properly with correct levels of funding.'"

The Council note the contents of the petition and highlight that the figures presented in the petition are incorrect. Having investigated the data shared, we can confirm that the figures recorded for the Spring Census 2024 which was completed by the school, have only 12 pupils (6.8%) with EHCPs and 39 pupils (17.6%) on the SEN register. This does not include the 3 pupils in the PD SRP.

(as of Spring 2024)	National	London	Statistical Neighbors	Hillingdon	Coteford Infant School
% Pupils with EHCP	4.8%	4.9%	4.5%	4.9%	6.8%
% Pupils on SEN Register	18.4%	17.6%	16.9%	16.7%	17.6%

As you can see from the table above, this shows that the number of children at the school with an EHCP are slightly higher than average, but children on the SEN register are around average when compared to London, higher than the Hillingdon average, and lower than the National average.

It is also important to note that Hillingdon schools have a policy in place to provide exceptional funding to schools whose percentage of EHCPs exceed an agreed value above their Number on Roll (NOR), of which Coteford Infant school is already a benefactor. This is in recognition of the higher than average number of children attending the school with an EHCP, and funding is paid at an additional £6,000 per child to all qualifying schools. This is non-statutory funding which the Council has decided to provide to schools who are highly inclusive to ensure they have sufficient notional funding to appropriately support their children's needs. This funding is specifically for children with EHCPs in mainstream schools and excludes children attending

SRPs or DUs, as they are funded differently, with the £6,000 notional funding provided. In closing the SRP, the children would be counted as part of the exceptional funding figures. As Coteford Infant school has a higher number of children with EHCPs, the funding that would ordinarily be provided by commissioning places at the SRP will instead be provided via the exceptional funding stream. Therefore, the funding the school receives for these children will continue to remain the same.

(b) Individual child admission to the SRP petition

A second petition was received relating to an individual pupil's circumstances, signed by 1230 signatories, of which 247 were London Borough of Hillingdon residents (20% of signatories). The details of the petition are below:

*The petition "is to express the dissatisfaction of the LA's treatment of *****", by not allowing ***** admission into the SRP unit at Coteford Infant School by local residents via change.org. We would like the Local Authority to reconsider the ***** admission into the SRP unit and to consider the implications this will have on *****. This decision has impacted ***** right to thrive."*

Although this second petition relates to an individual child, it does relate to the PD SRP, and we have therefore taken the matter into consideration as part of the consultation. Council Officers are in contact with the family of this child directly to discuss the matter.

Conclusion

This proposal is to close the SRP at Coteford Infants, and does not affect the mainstream school, which will continue to support children with a wide range of needs and abilities. The school will continue to offer education to the local community, and any parent / family will still be able to express a preference for their child to attend Coteford Infants which will be assessed against the school's admissions criteria.

The proposal does not seek to change the level of funding received by the school for the children on roll at the SRP. If the proposal is agreed, the children on roll at the SRP will continue as pupils of the school with the understanding that the provision continues to be appropriate to meet their needs, with the funding provided as stated in the child's Education Health and Care Plan, which is the same as the school receives now.

The formal statutory consultation helped to collate views and queries from a range of stakeholders, including parents/Carers, local residents and staff.

The consultation process outlined some of the concerns raised by the respondents, with 2.8% in favour of the closure of the PD SRP, 96.6% objecting, and the other 0.6% of respondents did not express a view.

It is important to recognise that families must have a choice where their children and young people are educated, and as the reducing demand for places in the Coteford Infants PD SRP shows, families are choosing their local schools for children and young people to support peer relationships and educate children in their local communities. This is facilitated and supported by schools making reasonable adjustments for children with physical disabilities as appropriate, to ensure that the children and young people have a typical experience at their school of choice.

The Council's review of specialist provision has already led to an increase of 72 places in SRPs for children and young people with Autism and communication needs where there is increased demand, and this is continuing with additional places planned for secondary provision next year. It is apparent, however, that demand for places for children and young people with physical disabilities has reduced to a level where there is not any future need for this provision, and children will be educated in mainstream schools with the appropriate support and funding as many do already.

The Council will continue to assess the needs of children and young people across the Borough through the current statutory process, to ensure they are educated in the most appropriate provisions to meet their individual needs, which will include a range of mainstream and specialist provision.

The proposed closure of the SRP will not lead to any changes for the children or the school, now or in future. All support will continue as it is currently, and funding will also not change. The closure of the SRP is a formality and does not impact the school, the way they support their children, or the funding provided, to enable the school to deliver the support. This academic year, Coteford Infants will not see any change in the funding provided by the Council for the 3 children on roll at the SRP as a result of this proposal, and next year the Council have committed to continue to fund the school for the 2 children who will be on roll at the SRP at the same level the 2 children are funded currently.

There will be an ongoing dialogue with families and the school to ensure that there will be no change to the support outlined in the children's EHCP for the remaining children on roll at the SRP, and support is delivered in line with their assessed needs until such time they leave the school.

The 3 families affected by the proposal who have children in the PD SRP were informed and consulted prior to the publication of the consultation, and officers have continued to speak with families during this process.

Next Steps

Comments from the Children, Families & Education Select Committee will be noted, and the recommendation will go to Cabinet on 12th December 2024 for formal approval. The Education Service will refer to the following guidance "Making significant changes ('prescribed alterations') to maintained schools" [School organisation: local-authority-maintained schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-significant-changes-to-maintained-schools) :

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this stage.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to the recommendation. Local authorities may propose changes to establish/alter or remove a SEN. They can do so by complying with the statutory process for prescribed alterations.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[*Making significant changes \('prescribed alterations'\) to maintained schools.*](#)

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – Letter to school outlining reasons for SRP closure – Sept 2024
- Appendix 2 – Coteford Infant – Closure of SRP process
- Appendix 3 – Coteford Infant – Text for school webpage
- Appendix 4 – Coteford Infant – Closing an SRP FAQs – Aug 24
- Appendix 5 – Letter to all parents outlining reasons for SRP closure 18.09.24
- Appendix 6 – Public Notice Coteford Infant
- Appendix 7 – Consultation Proposal – Coteford Infant – Proposal for SRP removal