

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	27th November, 2013
3.	Title:	Proposed extension of planned places at Newman Special School for children with special educational needs
4.	Directorate:	Children and Young People's Services

5. Summary

Further to the Green Paper: Support and Aspiration, and the Children and Families Bill, legislation will be forthcoming in 2014 to promote a new approach to special educational needs and disability (SEND) 0-25. It is intended, amongst other aims, to:

- ensure equal life chances; raise aspirations and improve attainment
- reform provision and significantly improve support to meet identified need
- empower young people and their families and to increase choice where this is not incompatible with the efficient use of resources or education of other children
- plan and commission support across education, health and social care.

In Rotherham, the findings of the Autism Spectrum Condition Scrutiny Review resulted in a number of recommendations for planning and developing specialist provision. One key outcome was:

- Proposals should be brought forward to build capacity locally, with the aim of keeping funding within Rotherham and reducing out of authority placements

Following the previous report to Cabinet on 18th September 2013 a pre-statutory consultation period has been undertaken. This report seeks Cabinet approval to commence statutory consultation by the posting of a public notice for a four week period. Should Cabinet approve the statutory consultation, a further report will be brought to Members detailing any representations made during this period and seeking a final determination on the proposals.

6. Recommendation:

- **It is recommended that statutory consultation should commence on the proposal to expand provision for children with SEN initially by 22 places from April 2014 and to 30 places from September 2014.**

7. Proposals and Details

The proposal to be considered and further consulted upon is:-

The ASC Scrutiny Review reported that the number of children and young people with a diagnosis of ASD is approximately 1:60 in the 0-19 age range. This is well above the regional and national range (1246 as at June 2012). Rotherham has a range of provision across the developmental continuum and the majority of children have their needs met within mainstream settings, attached resources or special schools for children with a significant learning difficulty. However, an analysis of placements, including out of authority placements, has concluded that there remains a gap in provision for:

- children and young people with significant and complex learning, social, emotional and communication needs
- children who may experience a neuro developmental condition (for example social and communication difficulties, ASC)
- children with a high social and emotional vulnerability including trauma, loss and unmet attachment and relationship needs
- children within the broad cognitive range from mainstream ability to mild moderate learning difficulties
- children who are highly likely to require on-going assessment and intervention from health services (CAMHS, therapy services) and social care/ early intervention and support
- children who are experiencing high levels of anxiety and are currently educated other than at school for example by parents or the LA's home tuition service and where a gradual, supported reintegration into an appropriate peer group and environment is considered by all to be a positive next step forward

This also reflects feedback from families, schools and services. However, the proposed provision would not be exclusive to children who have a diagnosis of ASC.

It is proposed initially to expand the numbers on roll at Newman Special School from 90 to 110, an increase of 20 planned places for children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming that school in Part 4 of a Statement of SEN. In addition, it is proposed to offer 2 'assessment' places (total = 22 places) for children who are not in receipt of a Statement of SEN but where professional advice indicates that the child / young person requires an immediate placement in specialist provision whilst a statutory education assessment is underway. Local Authorities can refer, exceptionally, to a specific provision within the 2002 SEN Code of Practice (Paragraph 7:3-2) where all involved, including parents/carers, are in agreement to

proceed on this basis. Thereafter the provision will expand to accommodate 30 children.

It is proposed that the Head teacher of Rotherham's Milton Special School, a specialist school for Communication and Interaction, will be seconded as a consultant Head teacher for the equivalent of 3 days per week for 2 years working alongside the Head teacher of Newman Special School where the children with a Statement of SEN would be on roll. It is proposed that there will be a high adult: pupil ratio together with targeted involvement of a multi-disciplinary team including educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and mental health / youth workers. Children and young people may benefit from established links to mainstream schools and to post 16 pathways and options. It is anticipated that this provision will work closely with other local provision for vulnerable children, including those with ASC, and provide a resource for other teaching, support staff and staff in Local Authority support services.

8. Finance

It is proposed to modify 'the Bridge' building adjacent to Newman Special School which will become vacant as a result of the restructure of Alternative Provision. There is no requirement for a significant capital build project however internal and external refurbishment and modification will be required to create an environment suitable to meet the needs of our vulnerable children and young people with significant and complex learning, social, emotional and communication needs.

It is proposed that there will be 4 separate teaching and learning groups: one aged 10-12 years; two aged 12-16 and one aged 16+. In addition, there will be other required spaces for individual and smaller group withdrawal to deliver targeted, bespoke programmes and therapeutic intervention. The environment will need to be developed further in conjunction with the CYPS Capital Project Team, Architects and the school. A site survey has been completed and it is estimated that £150k from Capital maintenance budget (allocated to CYPS from the Department for Education DfE) will be required for the refurbishment project.

Funding for the operation of the provision will be under the DfE revised funding arrangements for education which came into effect from 1st April 2013. There will be an allocation of £10k per planned place, plus Element 3 top up funding per child at an agreed rate, from the High Needs Block budget. It should be noted that this will be a delegated budget which will be managed by Newman School and Governing Body.

The funding will form part of the School delegated budget as such the management of the school budget will continue to be in accordance with Rotherham School Finance Regulations.

It is anticipated that the development of this provision will realise savings on out of authority expenditure and improve the local offer within Rotherham.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

There are always risks and uncertainties when school place provision is considered since future pupil numbers are based on a combination of current knowledge of needs, gaps in provision and estimations of future need. Local Authorities however are obliged to provide sufficient places, promote diversity and increase parental choice.

The timetable for a pre-statutory and statutory phase is set out below. Formal objections may be lodged during the representation period following the publication of the statutory notice. A final decision should be determined by the Decision Maker within 2 months from the end of the representation period. If this fails to be done, then the matter is referred to the Schools Adjudicator for decision.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The major theme supported by the proposal is 'to ensure that everyone has access to skills, knowledge and information to enable them to play their part in society'.

The proposal meets the aims of Transforming Rotherham Learning and the Rotherham Mission for all its children and young people. The proposal has the support of representatives from Learners First who are working in conjunction with Local Authority Officers and an external consultant to finalise a review of specialist provision in Rotherham.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation meetings have been undertaken with the Governing Body of Newman Special School and representatives from Milton Special School. Meetings have been undertaken with Staff and Union Representatives at the School and Parents, Carers and Siblings of pupils attending Newman School. Attendees at the meetings confirmed their support for the expansion proposals and the Authority's intention to commence Statutory Consultation. Agreement to proceed has also been received from the 5 head teachers of Rotherham's 6 Special Schools in Rotherham and a sub group of the Inclusion Strategic Steering Group which was set up to review alternative provision and complex needs provision in Rotherham. Governors at Milton Special School have confirmed their agreement.

Consultation has also been undertaken with all School Governing Bodies within the Borough, All Borough Elected Members and the three local Members of Parliament. No concerns or objections to the proposals have been received.

Consultation timeline for the proposed expansion:

Members to agree to consultation Pre statutory consultation period	18 th September 2013
Report to Members seeking approval to proceed to Statutory Consultation phase	27 th November 2013
Publication of statutory notices	6 th December 2013
4 week period for representations and objections closes	3 rd January 2014
Members to determine LA decision	15 th January 2014
Implementation	28th April 2014

There are no other linked proposals to consider.

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