

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

REPORT

DATE OF MEETING:	18 May 2011
SUBJECT:	Reconfiguration of Special Schools
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IS THE REPORT EXEMPT?	No
IS THE REPORT CONFIDENTIAL?	No

1. Purpose

For Noting

2. Background/Context

In January 2010 the County Council commissioned the Lincolnshire School Improvement Service to undertake a review of all special school and mainstream unit provision in the authority:

To provide a strategy and delivery plan for affordable, locally based provision which minimises differences between areas; maximises similarities; is not subject to or driven by ad hoc decision making in relation to enhanced provision; does not create perverse incentives and which minimises the need for extensive travel for children and young people”.

(Source: LCC commissioning paper).

The review was undertaken involving a number of working groups made up of officers, headteachers, parents, governors and elected members with the report being subject to the full County Council processes. Following extensive work with all stakeholders the report and the 13 recommendations were adopted by the Executive Committee on the 1st March 2011.

The review included and evaluation of all specialist provision in the authority both in terms of the quality of provision provided, the quality of the accommodation and resources, the location of schools and units and the travel maps for each school. The report acknowledged the quality of the existing provision in terms of OfSTED outcomes but recognised that not all school sites were a) fit for purpose b) able to be modified c) suitably located to meet the needs of the authority. The outcome of the review has taken the form of 13 recommendations which are set in the attached appendix (see appendix 1)

As a part of this wider review a specific focus was given to the needs of Lincoln city, this was to include the agreed development of two designated specialist units at the Priory Witham and City Academies to accommodate up to 100 pupils with more complex needs on the two sites as part of a wider specialist provision offer in the city. More recent work in relation to the city of Lincoln has resulted in seeking County Council approval to consult on the reconfiguration of special school provision in the city through the closure of Queens Park Special School and enhancing the provision at St Christopher's and St Francis Special Schools; this is ongoing.

3. Recommendation

That the Children and Young Person's Strategic Partnership note the content.

APPENDIX 1

1. Ensure that each district has the necessary specialist provision to cater for the significant majority of the current and future special school population in the area.
2. Extend the introduction of the area special school model into each of the districts. This will enable a wider range of need to be met in each locality, with these needs being addressed in either new build/modified premises or through special schools working in partnership or through federation. Area special schools will have the remit to promote collaboration, inclusion and partnership working with mainstream schools through a programme of high quality "outreach" support and staff development opportunities. This will be further enhanced through locally based partnership working with health and other providers to ensure referral and access to specialist services is readily available.
3. Address the constraints that current descriptors (used to define the population of special schools) impose on admissions and so increase parental choice in the localities.
4. Reduce the need for children and young people with special educational needs to travel outside of their district to access the specialist provision that they require.
5. Extend the use of mainstream unit provision to meet a wider range of special educational needs in the seven districts, to create more inclusive opportunities and a reduced need for travel.
6. Provide a range of partnership services to meet the need in the localities rather than across the county, with fast and easy referral to service
7. Build the capacity, competence and confidence of mainstream educational settings to provide for greater numbers of children and young people with special educational needs.

Build capacity, confidence and competence in special schools to provide for more complex needs.

8. Co-locate special school provision onto mainstream school sites, when and as the opportunity arises, to enhance opportunities for inclusive practice.
9. Ensure a clear understanding on the part of special schools, and mainstream unit and Designated Specialist Unit provision with regards the nature of the provision and the intended outcomes to be achieved.
10. Reduce the reliance on Out of County provision for children and young people with complex and/or "low incidence" needs through the use of locally available residential (and where appropriate day) provision.
11. Effectively respond to the needs of Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities 16-19 and to reduce the need for residential placements with Independent Specialist Providers.
12. Address the limitations created as a result of the small size of some special schools and/or the suitability of their buildings and through remodelling or reconfiguration successfully meet current and future demand.
13. Secure a more collaborative approach to meeting the special educational needs of children and young people in the districts by encouraging greater partnership working between special schools,

special schools and mainstream schools and special schools and the further education and training provider sector.