

Report on behalf of Peter Duxbury, Executive Director Adults and Children

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	25 February 2011
Subject:	Review and Reconfiguration of Special School and Mainstream Unit Provision – Public Consultation Feedback

Summary:

At the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd October the review report was discussed fully and a request made that an update be provided to the committee following the period of public consultation. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee as to the outcomes of the public consultation on this matter.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on the public consultation feedback.

1. Background

Four consultation meetings have taken place around the county to seek the views of parents, carers and other stakeholders. These were extensively publicised in the local press, via letters to parents sent via their schools, direct mailing to parents and carers whose child(ren) accessed special school or mainstream unit provision and through the Parent Carer Council and the Parent Partnership organisation.

The four meetings were well attended (140 in total) and following a brief presentation much time was spent in listening and responding to questions from the audience. A number of key themes were raised and fully discussed at the meetings, these included:

1. The need for assurance that the LA would not require a child to change special schools to reduce transport costs if they are settled in their present school (see appendix 1).
2. Funding streams to make the necessary structural solutions.
3. The need to retain a sufficiency of places in special schools.
4. The effective management of a wider range of need within generic special schools.

5. Developing the expertise of mainstream schools to effectively meet more complex needs and the means by which they would be funded.

The meetings were also attended by a small number of parents who used them as an opportunity to further explore the new funding arrangements for addressing SEN in mainstream schools.

In addition to the round of public meetings an on line survey tool was developed to seek the views of three distinct groups – Parents/Carers, Governors, Headteachers/Teachers/Officers. This method of consultation has proved to be successful with a total of 92 responses to date (see appendix 2).

The consultative process in relation to the published report has included:

All parents/carers of children who attend mainstream unit provision and special schools were provided with the web link for the report and on-line survey tool, with hard copies being made available in schools and at the consultation meetings.

All Lincolnshire schools have received a copy of the review report and the on line survey tool, with copies being made available to governors via the same route.

The involvement of the Parent Carer Council and Parent Partnership organisations has ensured that information has gone to those parents of children with additional needs who do not attend specialist provision.

Public consultation meetings have been held in four venues across the authority and the review report and the on-line survey tool has been made available electronically and in hard copy via special and mainstream schools.

Three consultative groups have been in place throughout the review process, the membership of which has included: headteachers (special and mainstream), governors, parents, officers, voluntary sector, Parent Partnership, Parent Carer Council and elected members.

2. Conclusion

The thoroughness of the public consultation on this report ensured that all stakeholders had an opportunity to express their views and to seek clarification on the report and the detail of and the 13 recommendations set out within it.

It is evident from the consultation and the feedback from the on-line survey tool that there is a consensus of agreement and support from all parties for the implementation of the 13 recommendations set out in the review report (see appendix 2).

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Not applicable.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix 1	Amendment to Recommendation 4
Appendix 2	Analysis of survey returns

5. Background Papers

Document Title	Where the document can be viewed
	<p>A copy of the “Review of Special school and Mainstream Unit Provision” Report was distributed for the meeting held on the 22nd October 2010.</p> <p>A copy of the online survey tool can be accessed via sgregory@cfbt.com</p>

This report was written by Paul Snook, who can be contacted on 01522 553276 or psnook@cfbt.com.

Appendix 1

In response to parental concerns that:

“The need for assurance that the LA would not require a child to change special schools to reduce transport costs if they are settled in their present school.”

The Report will be amended to include the following bullet in Recommendation 4;

- Any plans regarding the future placement of children and young people currently in special school provision to attend a special school in their locality will be made with the agreement of parents and carers.

Appendix 2

Survey Responses

In addition to the round of public meetings an on line survey tool was developed to seek the views of three distinct groups – Parents/carers, Governors, Headteachers/teachers/officers. This method of consultation has proved to be successful with a total of 92 responses to date.

With 5 as the maximum, the average point scores for each of the recommendations is a positive response.

Recommendation	Average Point Score
Ensure that each district has the necessary specialist provision to cater for the significant majority of the current and future special school population.	4.5
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.	4.3
Provide a range of partnership services to meet the need in the localities rather than across the county, with fast and easy referral to services.	4.2
Build capacity, confidence and competence in special schools to provide for more complex needs.	4.2
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.	4.1
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.	4.1
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.	4
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.	3.9
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. <i>(*The area special school model excludes those pupils whose primary need is Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties).</i>	3.9
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.	3.7

Ensure a clear understanding on the part of special schools, and mainstream unit and Designated Specialist Unit (DSU) provision in academies with regards the nature of the provision and the intended outcomes to be achieved.	3.6
Build the capacity, competence and confidence of mainstream educational settings to provide for greater numbers of children and young people with SEN.	3.4
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.	3.3
Co-locate special school provision onto mainstream school sites, when and as the opportunity arises, to enhance opportunities for inclusive practice.	3.1