

<b>Open Report on behalf of the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services</b>
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Report to:	<b>Executive</b>
Date:	<b>3 July 2012</b>
Subject:	<b>Lincolnshire County Strategy for Post 16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and or Disabilities (LLDD)</b>
Decision Reference:	
Key decision?	<b>Yes</b>

**Summary:**

This is the fourth strand of the Special School and Mainstream Unit provision review. As a part of this wide ranging review it was agreed that a review of Post 16 LLDD provision be undertaken and a strategy agreed so that the County Council is well placed to meet its obligations in respect of this vulnerable group of learners. With the aspiration that the significant majority of Post LLDD are able to have their education, employment and training needs (EET) met within the county and within their respective communities.

The drafting of this strategy has been undertaken by officers working with a stakeholder group made up of representatives from schools, colleges, independent providers and specialist providers, parents, young people, the voluntary sector and elected members. This group has also been involved in the development of the action plan for the successful delivery of the strategy and has been informed in its work by examples of innovative practice from around the county.

In adopting this strategy the County Council will be well placed to respond to the planned legislation in respect of "A new approach to special educational needs and disability" (Green Paper 2011) and the expectation of the Secretary of state for Education that the YPLA works with local authorities to "develop proposals for handing over responsibility for the commissioning of provision for high cost learners with a learning difficulty assessment aged up to 25, with the aim that this transfers for 2012/13".

There are 8 key priorities set out in the strategy that when implemented will enable a network of flexible provision to be developed across the county to meet the individual needs of the significant majority of Post 16 LLDD's.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Executive is recommended to approve the:

Lincolnshire County Strategy for Post 16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and or Disabilities (LLDD).

**Alternatives Considered:**

The current approach to meeting the needs of Post 16 LLDD is reliant on the use of Independent Specialist Providers with high operating costs and provision that is not offered around the county and for some young people that can only be accessed out of the county. This is contrary to the expectation of the Secretary of State in respect of the YPLA and local authorities and the proposals set out in the 2011 Green paper.

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

This is best captured by the following statement taken from the strategy paper:

*“At the centre of this work are all the young people in Lincolnshire who have a learning difficulty and or disability and whose future lives will be influenced by this development. This strategic plan formulates the mechanisms we can put in place to ensure that each individual has the best opportunity and support so that as far as is possible they can succeed in their future lives and become active members of their communities”.*

**Conclusion**

The adoption of this strategy will strengthen the County Council’s ability to work in partnership with stakeholders to ensure that the council’s statutory responsibilities in respect of Post 16 LLDD are fully met, making best use of the resources available within the county, encouraging the development of new resources and opportunities, reducing bureaucracy and improving efficiency.

**Legal Comments:**

The legal issues arising from this decision, which is within the remit of the executive, are set out in this report.

**Resource Comments:**

As explained in the report, there is an expectation that responsibility for commissioning of provision for high cost learners with a learning difficulty aged up to 25 will be transferred to Local Authorities from 2012/13. There remains uncertainty over the precise level of funding that will transfer, but the DfE' consultation on school funding reform published on 26 March 2012 suggests that the Local Authority's Higher Needs block of funding will be based on the 2011/12 student numbers and spend. The financial impact of this transfer cannot be determined until final decisions are made by the DfE. Nevertheless, the strategy set out in this report will be delivered from within the available resources. Furthermore, the strategy will enable learners to achieve their full potential within their local communities and, at the same time, improve value for money by reducing reliance on out of county high cost independent specialist providers.

**Consultation****Has The Local Member Been Consulted?**

The stakeholder group included elected members

**Has The Executive Councillor Been Consulted?**

Yes

**Scrutiny Comments**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 1 June 2012. Comments from this meeting will be presented to the Executive on 3 July 2012.

**Policy Proofing Actions Required**

N/A

**Appendices**

Lincolnshire County Strategy for Post 16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and or Disabilities.

**Background Papers**

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Review of Special School and Mainstream Unit Provision.	<a href="http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk">www.lincolnshire.gov.uk</a>

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