

**Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes, Executive Director for Children's Services**

Report to:	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>20 October 2017</b>
Subject:	<b>Proposed Changes to Enhanced Resource Provision Units Supporting Children with Hearing Impairments</b>

**Summary:**

The purpose of this report is to inform and engage, with members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, on the public consultation which proposes alternative options on the future provision of Enhanced Resource Provision Units supporting children with significant hearing impairments across Lincolnshire.

**Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is asked to

1. consider the background of the review and the proposed options for public consultation
2. provide feedback on the proposed options during the consultation period including their preferred model for future provision.

## **1. Background**

Children's Services are committed to the inclusion of all children with Hearing Impairments who should be offered the ability to access education in a school as near to their home as possible and provided with high quality support when they need it, so they can achieve their potential in learning.

In June 2017 a review of the Enhanced Resource Provision (ERP) units was commenced to ensure the provision continued to meet the needs of children with a hearing impairment and families. The review evidenced the number of children accessing support through an ERP had reduced significantly over recent years and the current units were now underutilised. This reduction was mainly due to a clear majority of families wanting their child to attend their nearest school so their child could benefit from education in their local community.

The Council employs the Lincolnshire Sensory Education Support Team (SEST) which is staffed by Specialist qualified Teachers who provide learning to children with sensory impairments.

At present SEST supports 545 children across Lincolnshire with a sensory impairment from birth to school leaving age. Over 98% of these children are supported within their local mainstream school with outreach support being provided to schools through the SEST service.

Depending on the child's level of need they are likely to have an Education, Health and Care Plan in place, providing any additional support or resources required to meet their needs within a mainstream school setting or specialist setting.

At present there are four schools (2 primary and 2 secondary) across Lincolnshire with an ERP unit providing targeted support to 9 children with significant hearing impairments. Specialist teaching from these units is provided through SEST. Some of these children also have complex needs in addition to their sensory impairment which impacts their learning.

The review has concluded many parents and carers prefer to have their children attend their local school as they have confidence in their school's ability to meet their child's needs. Additional feedback includes preference for their child going to their local school so they can attend with family members and/or friends. Parents and carers have also stated they prefer not to have their child travel excessive distances to a dedicated ERP Unit. This review has prompted the need to undertake formal consultation on the ERP Units.

## **2. Conclusion**

As a result of the feedback received to date a number of alternative models for service provision have emerged and we now want to consult with children, parents, carers and all stakeholders to understand in more detail their aspirations and preferences for how services for children with hearing impairments are delivered.

The proposals which are being consulted on are not about reducing the level of provision of support which is currently provided from SEST but are intended to enhance it by providing targeted support where and when it is needed to all children across Lincolnshire.

The consultation proposals (attached as a separate document) provide more detailed information on the background of the service provision and the four proposed options being consulted on:

**Option 1** - Retain existing 4 units across Lincolnshire (No change)

**Option 2** - Reduce Number of ERP units from 4 to 2 across Lincolnshire

**Option 3** - No further placement of children into the ERPs – all new placements into local mainstream schools

**Option 4** - Decommission the ERP Units and support children in a mainstream school setting

The consultation is solely based on the question of whether the ERP units should remain, be reconfigured or be decommissioned with this provision being removed from the Local Offer, and replaced with enhanced support through SEST.

**3. Consultation**

**a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?**

Yes

**b) Risks and Impact Analysis**

An Equality Impact Analysis has been completed which will be updated during the course of the consultation to reflect feedback received. The Impact Analysis has been published on the Council's Family Services Directory website together with the consultation paper.

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Proposed Changes to Enhanced Resource Provision Units Supporting Children with Hearing Impairments Consultation Paper

**5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Andrew Hancy, who can be contacted on 01522 5554031 or [andrew.hancy@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.hancy@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

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