

# **Public Consultation on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy**

## **Consultation Outcome**

**Consultation Phase**  
**8<sup>th</sup> January – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

## **Content**

Introduction	Page 3
Consultation Opportunities	Page 3
Consultation Events	Page 5
Consultation Survey	Page 21
SEND Mailbox and other methods of contribution	Page 41
Mainstream School Consultation	Page 46
LCC Response to Consultation	Page 47
Conclusion	Page 50

## **1. Introduction**

The Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy is the product of extensive collaboration between Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), Special School Leaders and the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF), in response to the significant capacity, suitability and sustainability pressures which exist across Special School provision. The proposed strategy was presented to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017 and to Executive Council on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017 for approval to engage in public consultation regarding the new proposals for SEND education. Approval to commence with public consultation based on the proposed strategy was granted by Executive Council.

The purpose of the public consultation was to gather feedback for parent/carers, schools and other interested parties on the proposed strategy and model. The model had been developed by Special School Leaders with the parent/carer challenge being provided by LPCF but it was important to understand the perspectives of all parties potentially impacted by the proposed changes. The specific changes proposed for each school can be found in the Planned School Changes Summary document.

In line with DfE guidelines on consultation principals, consultation relating to significant change for schools must be clear and concise, last for a proportionate amount of time, take into account the group being consulted with and be responded too in a timely manner. LCC has given due consideration to these key principals and ensured that the consultation for the Special Schools strategy has been far-reaching, informative and has provided ample time and opportunity for interested parties to comment and contribute.

## **2. Consultation Opportunities**

The public consultation period for this strategy commenced on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and ran for 9 weeks to ensure that all interested parties had the opportunity to consider the proposal and contribute accordingly. In order to ensure all interested parties were fully aware of the proposed strategy and subsequent consultation, a dedicated webpage, on the LCC website, was launched on the 8<sup>th</sup> January which included the following information:

- Outline of the strategy.
- Full strategy including proposed model maps/plan and case studies.
- Consultation letter, outlining the proposals and how to respond including links to dedicated website and mailbox for contributions and questions.
- List of all consultation events.
- Links to surveys - adult and child/young person.
- Some frequently asked questions.

The webpage was developed to ensure all information relating to the proposed strategy and subsequent consultation information could be accessed in one place. It was set out with an easy to read summary of the strategy, followed by links to both

the surveys and also a full list of all consultation events to be held over the next 9 weeks.

The consultation webpage was supported by a comprehensive communication plan which published the proposed strategy and consultation across local media and social media outlets. A media briefing was held by Cllr Bradwell, Deputy Leader of the Council and Debbie Barnes, Director of Children's Services to launch the consultation on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and subsequent articles and social media messages were published throughout to ensure the consultation remained high in the public's awareness.

All available internal communication routes were utilised to ensure all LCC colleagues were fully aware of the strategy. SEND staff were briefed via team meetings to ensure they had adequate knowledge of the proposals to share with pupils and their families.

The LCC Customer Services Centre was provided with a summary of the strategy and consultation information. Customer advisors were informed to signpost to the SEND Project Office should any enquiries present via this route. The consultation process was also advertised on the Local Offer and Family Services Directory with links to the dedicated website.

A consultation letter, outlining the purpose of the DfE High Needs Strategic Review and how Lincolnshire County Council proposes to address its requirements, was sent to over 1000 key interested parties including the following organisations and personnel:

- Department for Education
- Education Funding Alliance
- Local MP's
- Local MEP's
- Regional Schools Commissioner
- National Charities and third sector providers working for children and young people with SEND in Lincolnshire
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- District Council Chief Executives
- District Councillors
- Parish Councillors
- Trade Unions
- Health Commissioners and Providers
- All Lincolnshire Special Schools (Heads and Governing Bodies)
- All Lincolnshire Mainstream Schools (via Perspective Lite)
- All Out of County and Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools where Lincolnshire pupils are currently placed
- Alternative Provision/Pupil Referral Units
- All Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinators (SENDCo) registered with LCC SENDCo Network
- All Lincolnshire Independent Schools
- All Parent/Carers of pupils at Special School (including OOC and INMS)

- All Parent/Carers of pupils electively home educated with SEND

In order to ensure all parent/carers of pupils with SEND received the consultation information and details of the planned events, all Special Schools distributed a copy of the aforementioned letter to their pupils on the launch date through school communication methods. In addition, these schools published links to the LCC webpage on their school websites and encouraged parent/carers to contribute to the consultation.

Parent/Carers of children and young people with SEND, who are members of the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum, also received information regarding the proposed strategy and details of how to engage in the consultation via the LPCF website and email. LPCF publicised the consultation across their network extensively and regularly sent out email reminders with links to the LCC webpage, encouraging parental involvement.

Consideration was given during the planning stage of the project regarding pupils with SEND in mainstream schools and how to ensure they received the information about a proposed strategy which could affect them in the future. It was agreed that all mainstream schools would be communicated with via Perspective Lite (LCC education communication system). This briefing would include a request to share the consultation letter and dedicated website details with all parent/carers of pupils with identified SEND in their schools and also to post details of the consultation on the school website. In addition, all parent/carers of children with SEND who electively home educate were sent the consultation letter either by email or by post.

A summary of the proposed strategy and details of how to engage with the consultation were circulated to all SENDCo's registered with the LCC SENDCo Network with a request to ensure that all parent/carers of pupils with SEND received this information.

Twenty-one consultation events were planned during the consultation period to ensure adequate opportunity for interested parties to openly discuss the proposals and contribute. These events were a combination of 16 school led events, 5 Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum events and 3 Lincolnshire County Council public events.

### **3. Consultation Events**

For LA maintained Special Schools, in accordance with DfE Guidance "Making prescribed alterations to maintained schools", it is expected that all LA's and Governing bodies "will ensure open and fair consultation with parents and other interested parties to gauge demand for their proposed changes and to provide them with sufficient opportunity to give their views". Consultation events were conducted at all three LA maintained Special Schools, led by the Head Teacher and supported by the Assistant Director for Children's Services and other LA Officers.

In accordance with DfE Guidance "Making significant changes to an open academy", any proposed changes for an academy must be subject to fair and open local consultation, with all those who could be affected by the proposed change, and that

the proposal takes into account of all responses received. All Trusts facilitated their own consultation events for those associated with the school, supported by LA Officers and the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum.

The Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum held their own consultation events to ensure parent/carers of children and young people with SEND were provided with an arena to discuss the proposals which was separate from Special Schools and the LCC. At these events, LA Officers presented the proposed strategy answering any subsequent questions, followed by small group discussions hosted by LPCF volunteers.

Three public meetings were convened in Lincoln, Boston and Sleaford by LCC to enable all other interested parties to find out about the strategy, raise questions and contribute to the consultation.

For the purpose of this report each consultation events will be summarised outlining attendance and key discussion points.

The consultation events facilitated by Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum were deemed to be independent of either school or the LA and their members were given the opportunity to discuss the strategy without LCC or school involvement. The findings of the LPCF events, provided by Chairperson, Coralie Cross, can be viewed in Appendix i.

### **School Events (in order of occurrence)**

Warren Wood – A Specialist Academy, Gainsborough  
16<sup>th</sup> Jan'18 (2 events - afternoon and evening)

20 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Gary Nixon, Executive Principal of Mayflower Academy Trust and Michael Page, Chair of Mayflower Academy Trust. Supported by Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services and other LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance at the afternoon event were provided with a presentation by Gary Nixon and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact this school specifically. Questions were answered as part of the main group and then the audience separated into two smaller groups to discuss the strategy in detail and ask specific questions. A number of LA Officers and school representatives were available to answer specific questions.

At the evening event, numbers were significantly lower than anticipated so Gary Nixon and Heather Sandy held a small group discussion to outline the strategy and answer any questions presented.

Key Discussion Points:

- Reassurance that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school.
- Reassurance that the LA was fully committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Reassurance that pupils at Warren Wood could continue their secondary education at The Aegir School as parents were concerned that friendship groups would be separated.
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it.
- What are the funding arrangements for the proposals and would this mean more money for schools in general?
- When the strategy was going to be implemented and what it would mean for Warren Wood?
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so.
- Reassurance that there would not be any risk to Gainsborough's 16-19 provision
- Who would be running the proposed free school in Lincoln? Would this have a detrimental effect on the Gainsborough schools?
- Did the School Governors and Trustees support the proposals?
- How was the health offer for each school going to improve under the proposals?

Support for the proposed strategy was voiced by many parents and staff at the event. In general, those in attendance were reassured by both Gary Nixon and Michael Page's support for the strategy and trusted the school leadership to make the best decision for their pupils. Parent/carers recognised that the school already operates on an all needs basis and they were happy that this approach had been recognised as the future vision for all Special Schools.

#### The Aegir School, Gainsborough

18<sup>th</sup> Jan'18

23 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Gary Nixon, Executive Principal of Mayflower Academy Trust and Michael Page, Chair of Mayflower Academy Trust. Supported by Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services and other LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance were provided with a presentation by Gary Nixon and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact this school specifically. Questions were answered as part of the main group and then the audience separated into two smaller groups to discuss the strategy in detail and ask specific questions. A number of LA Officers and school representatives were available to answer specific questions.

#### Key Discussion Points:

- Reassurance that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school.

- Reassurance that the LA was fully committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it?
- Whether the local grammar school would be supporting the satellite pilots and getting involved?
- What are the funding arrangements for the proposals and would this mean more money for schools in general? Could more money be accessed now outside the proposed strategy?
- When the strategy was going to be implemented and what it would mean for The Aegir School?
- Parent/Carers recognised that their school was very well equipped to meet the needs of most pupils but identified some potential for improvements to meet the needs of pupils with SLD/PMLD.
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so.
- Reassurance that there would not be any risk to Gainsborough's 16-19 provision.
- Parents would like to see an improved offer for post-19 provision locally, particularly for pupils with SLD/PMLD who may not be able to access Lincoln College or other local providers?
- Who would be running the proposed free school in Lincoln? Would this have a detrimental effect on the Gainsborough schools? LCC provide assurances that if the free school proposal was to go ahead, all decision making process would be open and transparent.
- Did the School Governors and Trustees support the proposals?
- How was the health offer for each school going to improve under the proposals? Parents raised concerns regarding therapy provision which has been fed into the ongoing work with health commissioners.

Support for the proposed strategy was voiced by many parents and staff at the event. It was most evident that parents trusted the school leadership to make the right decision for its pupils, and families and were reassured by their support for the strategy. Parent/carers recognised that the school already operates on an all needs basis and they were happy that this approach had been recognised as the future vision for all Special Schools.

#### St Francis Special School, Lincoln

22<sup>nd</sup> Jan'18

9 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Ann Hoffman, Executive Head Teacher and Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services. Supported by Nigel Sisley, Chair of Governors and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance were provided with a presentation by Ann Hoffman and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would likely impact on this school specifically. As the attendance was quite low and only included 4

parent/carers, it was decided that a small group discussion would be the most appropriate way to explore the proposed strategy, with LA Officers and the Executive Head Teacher available to respond to questions raised.

Prior to the consultation event, a letter had been received by Debbie Barnes, Director, Children's Services from a School Governor expressing his concern about All Needs provision. The author highlighted the potential risks for schools losing their specialisms and recommended the three proposed schools within Lincoln City be considered as meeting all needs across the schools, thereby removing the need to alter current designations.

#### Key Discussion Points:

- How did the LA/School propose to ensure all pupils would have their needs fully met within an all needs setting? Significant concern was raised about keeping pupils with complex medical needs safe from pupils who are more mobile and may present with some hard-to-manage behaviours?
- The group, in principal, could understand why the all needs model had been chosen but would have preferred Lincoln city locality to develop a slightly different model – where all needs could be met across both St Francis and St Christopher's rather than replicating it in both schools.
- One parents and one school Governor expressed strong opinions that St Francis should retain its specialism.
- Reassurance that parental preference would not diminish.
- Would St Francis lose its comprehensive health and therapy provision as more pupils with complex medical needs attend their nearest school?
- Would other schools be pulling resources from their school i.e. health provision, specialist staffing?
- How are staff going to be upskilled to meet the wider range of needs within the school?
- What would the capital investment programme fund at St Francis?
- Reassurance that the LA were committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it? How will it be funded?
- Reassurance that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school and that pupils with SEND would not be negatively impacted by accessing mainstream opportunities.
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so. Concerned that the strategy is being driven by transport costs.
- How did the strategy propose to address post-19 provision for pupils with SEND?
- Support for the proposals regarding St Christopher's and the new free school but challenge regarding the historical closure of Queens Park School.
- Are supported internships being considered as part of the strategy?
- Clarity required on the future of residential provision at St Francis.
- Letter to schools not parent friendly - people didn't understand it.

At the event one parent and a Governor raised their concerns regarding the proposed changes to St Francis. Whilst recognising the challenges that many of their own pupils experience, undertaking long and difficult journeys to access the county's only specialist PD school, there was some resistance to making changes to the existing provision. Specific concerns relating to pupil safety and levels of expertise were expressed. Reassurance was provided by the Executive Head Teacher regarding the development of the workforce development plan which would be fully supported by the skilled and experienced staff at St Francis and that the capital investment programme would ensure that the premises and facilities would support the introduction of a wider range of needs into the school. The Executive Head Teacher also identified the significant shift in the pupil cohort that had already occurred at St Francis and that a much wider range of need was already being met.

St Christopher's School, Lincoln

25<sup>th</sup> Jan'18

12 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Ann Hoffman, Executive Head Teacher and Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services. Supported by Helen Todd, Acting Head Teacher and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance received a presentation by Ann Hoffman and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact on this school specifically. Questions were answered as part of the main group and then the audience separated into smaller groups to discuss the strategy in more detail and asked specific questions. A number of LA Officers and school representatives were available to answer specific questions.

Key Discussion Points:

- Reassurance that the LA were committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- How did the LA/School propose to ensure all pupils would have their needs fully met within an all needs setting? How would school ensure the safety of all pupils in an all needs setting?
- How does the funding for this project work? What are the plans for St Christopher's as it is hugely over-capacity and the premises needs significant development?
- How would the problems around car parking and the limited scope for expansion be managed? Parents offered a number of suggestions for improvements that should be made to the school.
- Increased capacity across all Special Schools was welcomed.
- How are staff going to be upskilled to meet the wider range of needs within the school?
- How was the health offer for each school going to improve under the proposals? Parents raised concerns regarding therapy provision which has been fed into the ongoing work with health commissioners.
- Discussion around the impact of the proposed new free school in Lincoln and how this would affect pupils at St Christopher's? Who was going to run it?

- As the proposed new free school would be taking on a number of pupils from St Christopher's to address its over-capacity, how would transition be managed?
- How would the reduction in school numbers be managed and its potential impact on staff?
- Discussion around the closure of Queens Park School and its impact on St Christopher's – parents expressed their dissatisfaction at this historical decision. LCC position reaffirmed regarding the reasons behind the Queens Park closure.
- Opportunities for extended day and school clubs and groups were explored. Parents supported the idea of school being the centre of the child's community and appreciated the benefits of local provision.
- Parents were interested in the proposals on Special School satellites and keen to understand more about the role of mainstream schools in the strategy.
- Did the strategy support further 16-19 provision and could the school develop this?
- Parents questioned whether having three all needs schools in the city was triplicating provision?

There was considerable positivity expressed towards the strategy by those in attendance. Once the strategy had been fully explained, parents and interested parties offered a number of suggestions as to how they would like to see the school improved. Parents and staff were encouraged by the potential development work proposed to the school and recognised the need to reduce school numbers to a more appropriate size.

#### Gosberton House Academy, Gosberton

26<sup>th</sup> Jan'18

33 friend of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Louise Stanton, Head Teacher and Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services. Supported by LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers and Andy Breckon, Chair of Lincolnshire Education Trust.

Those in attendance received a presentation by Louise Stanton and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact this school specifically. It was suggested that small groups would best enable open discussion but some parents were not in agreement and expressed a preference for open floor questions. This was facilitated by Heather Sandy to enable open discussion to take place. Small group discussions were then facilitated by LA Officers.

Key discussion points:

- How did the LA propose to ensure all pupils would have their needs fully met within an all needs setting? Significant concern was raised about "diluting" the specialist provision within Gosberton House Academy and no longer being able to meet the needs of pupils with Autism and Social and Communication need.
- Some parents present appreciated some aspects of the strategy but could not agree to Gosberton House Academy losing its specialism as an Autism school. Parents and Parent Governors expressed strong opinions that Gosberton House Academy should retain its specialism.

- How does the LA propose to ensure Gosberton House Academy retains its National Autism Society accreditation and would other schools be expected to work to this standard?
- Expressed concerns that parental preference would not diminish.
- Would other schools be pulling resources from this school i.e. specialist staffing required to support other schools?
- How are staff going to be upskilled to meet the wider range of needs within the school?
- What would the capital investment programme fund at Gosberton House Academy?
- Reassurance that the LA was committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Some parents requested commitment from the LA that they pupils would be able to transfer to The Priory School for secondary provision. For others, this was not a requirement.
- Parents proposed extending the age range of Gosberton House Academy to 14 though this is not viable due to natural number on role analysis. This option has been considered by the Project Board.
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it? How will it be funded?
- Reassurance that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school and those pupils with SEND would not be negatively impacted by accessing mainstream opportunities. Parents expressed that some pupils at Gosberton House Academy have not had positive experiences of mainstream, so considering a return via satellite provision could be detrimental to their education and wellbeing.
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so. Concerned that the strategy is being driven by transport costs.
- Some questioned the validity of the consultation.
- Why not have more specialist provision for pupils with Autism across the county so pupils don't have to travel long distances to get here?

There was strong opposition to the proposed changes to this school as identified in the discussion points raised. Some parents did state that parts of the strategy could be seen as beneficial for other schools but the impact of the proposed change on Gosberton House Academy would be too much to accept. Overwhelmingly, those present did not wish to see Gosberton House Academy change to meet a wider range of needs.

John Fielding School, Boston  
29<sup>th</sup> Jan'18

15 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Daran Bland, Executive Head Teacher. Supported by Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services, Peter Bell, CEO of Community Inclusive Trust and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance were provided with a presentation by Daran Bland and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact this school specifically. Open floor discussion followed, along with further small group discussion to enable detailed discussion with LA Officers.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Reassurance that the LA was committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Reassurance that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school.
- Parent/Carers were supportive of integration and inclusion across all education providers.
- Those present were keen to hear about relocation and redevelopment plans for John Fielding School and how it would impact pupils, families and staff.
- Managing staff recruitment due to expansion.
- Reassurance that class sizes would not increase with additional pupils.
- Managing transition to the new school. Where would the new school be?
- Would pupils and parents have a say in the design of the new school?
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it? Access to the wider curriculum and other opportunities.
- How was the health offer for each school going to improve under the proposals? Parents raised concerns regarding therapy provision which has been fed into the ongoing work with health commissioners.
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so.

Many in attendance expressed support for the proposed changes to the school and were excited about the prospect of having a school which had the right space and facilities for its pupils. Parents and staff did not express concerns regarding the provision of all needs and felt reassured that the new premises would support this level of inclusion. Some very pertinent questions were raised, particularly around managing transition and ensuring the experience of change is planned and seamless for pupils with SEND.

**St Lawrence School, Horncastle**

30th Jan'18

13 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Lea Mason, Executive Head Teacher of Lincolnshire Wolds Federation and David Rhodes, Chair of Lincolnshire Wolds Federation. Supported by Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services and other LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance received a presentation by Lea Mason and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact this school specifically. Open floor discussion was facilitated as those in attendance were happy to contribute to the consultation as a larger group.

### Key Discussion Points:

- Reassurance that the LA were committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- If the strategy is approved, what are the plans and timeline for implantation?
- Likely effect on St Lawrence pupils and families?
- Proposed development plans for St Lawrence.
- Importance of accessing the right provision over travel time and how parent/carers best address this dilemma.
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so.
- Relationship with mainstream schools and how this can be developed. Proposed Special School satellite pilot and how beneficial it would be to have some middle-ground between the two types of education.
- How was the health offer for each school going to improve under the proposals? Parents raised concerns regarding therapy provision which has been fed into the ongoing work with health commissioners.
- Reassurance that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school.
- Need for post-16 provision in Horncastle area.
- Those in attendance did not have significant concerns regarding the provision of all needs as school already provides this.

Those present talked enthusiastically about the proposed strategy and were keen to find out more about the proposed development of the premises. Some parent/carers expressed concern about their ongoing dilemma balancing the challenges of long journey times with access to the right education and were reassured that all county Special Schools would be benefitting from investment and were committed to meeting a wider range of needs.

Lincolnshire Wolds Federation, responsible for St Lawrence and St Bernard's School has subsequently written to Debbie Barnes, Director of Children's Services to expressing their full commitment to the strategic vision for SEND provision.

### Willoughby School, Bourne

1<sup>st</sup> Feb'18

17 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by James Husbands, Head Teacher and Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services. Supported by Andrew Hancy, Chair of Governors and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance received a presentation by James Husbands and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact this school specifically. Questions were answered as part of the main group and then the audience separated into two smaller groups to discuss the strategy in more detail

and asked specific questions. A number of LA Officers and school representatives facilitated these groups.

#### Key Discussion Points:

- Concerns were raised about the impact of expanding the school so significantly. How would this impact on class sizes, staffing etc.?
- Reassurance that all changes to the school would be part of a planned program of works and everything would be done to ensure it has limited impact on pupils.
- Reassurance that the LA was committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- If the strategy is approved, what are the plans and timeline for implantation?
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so.
- How are staff going to be upskilled to meet the wider range of needs within the school?
- It was noted by a parent that she thought that money was being spent in the wrong place. Mainstream schools are not committed to the learning and the educational progress of pupils with SEND and funding should be invested in these settings to enhance their provision.
- Parents at Willoughby welcomed the proposed Special School satellite provision and could see many pupils benefitting from this pilot.
- How was the health offer for each school going to improve under the proposals? Parents raised concerns regarding therapy provision which has been fed into the ongoing work with health commissioners.
- Parent/Carers were supportive of integration and inclusion across all education providers.

Many in attendance expressed their support for the strategy and welcomed the additional capital investment proposed for Willoughby School. Concerns were raised regarding issues not directly related to the strategy (EHCP process) and many parents were worried about the level of support provided for pupils with SEND in mainstream schools. Those in attendance did not appear to have significant concerns regarding the provision of all needs as school already meets a wide range of needs.

The Chair of Governors at Willoughby School has subsequently written to Debbie Barnes, Director of Children's Services expressing their full commitment to the strategic vision for SEND provision.

St Bernard's School, Louth

1<sup>st</sup> Feb'18

9 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Lea Mason, Executive Head Teacher of Lincolnshire Wolds Federation and David Rhodes, Chair of Lincolnshire Wolds Federation. Supported by Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services and other LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Due to the relatively low number of parent/carers attending this event, Lea Mason and Heather Sandy explained the strategy and responded to questions and concerns raised within a small group. This allowed for open discussion to take place.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Reassurance that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school.
- Reassurance that the LA was committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it?
- Impact of change to all need and whether it would impact on class sizes.
- Future of residential provision at St Bernard's?
- Letter to schools not parent friendly - people didn't understand it.
- Length of time to implement and complete the proposed building work and level of disruption.

Those in attendance expressed their support for the proposals and particularly welcomed the capital investment for their school. It was noted that St Bernard's is one of the schools where improvements to the premises are essential to enable wheelchair access across the whole estate and therefore parents were keen to see changes made.

The Priory and Garth Schools, Spalding  
6<sup>th</sup> Feb'18

16 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Daran Bland, Executive Head of Spalding Special Schools Federation. Supported by Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance were provided with a presentation by Daran Bland and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact this school specifically. Open floor discussion followed, along with further small group discussion towards the end of the event to enable further discussion with LA Officers.

**Key Discussion Points:**

- Need to understand more about the proposed amalgamation of The Priory and The Garth Schools and how this would impact on the education of the pupils. What would be the benefits and would there be detrimental effects e.g. class sizes?
- Is there sufficient capacity proposed for the school? Impact of the new John Fielding School.
- Transition would require careful planning for pupils and families.

- Reassurance that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school.
- Reassurance that the LA was committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it? Who would run it?
- Is there adequate funding allocated for such wide-scale changes?
- Provision across the two schools is already meeting all needs and confident that the proposals would ensure that they could meet need with better resources and facilities.
- How was the health offer for each school going to improve under the proposals? Parents raised concerns regarding therapy provision which has been fed into the ongoing work with health commissioners.

Many in attendance expressed their enthusiasm for the proposal. Some valuable comments were raised regarding capacity and sustainability and also around the importance of inclusion and integration in the Special School environment.

Additionally, an excellent example of mainstream and special collaboration was highlighted by the school, with a pupil being supported to attend the mainstream school next door for GCSE triple science.

#### The Eresby School

19<sup>th</sup> Feb'18

11 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by Michele Holiday, Executive Head Teacher. Supported by Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance were provided with a presentation by Michele Holiday and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact this school specifically. Open floor discussion followed, along with further small group discussion towards the end of the event to enable further discussion with LA Officers.

#### Key Discussion Points:

- Reassurance that the LA were committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it? Level of mainstream commitment?
- Support for the satellite provision once it did not encourage segregation of pupils with SEND – should focus on inclusion and integration.
- Is there adequate funding allocated for such wide-scale changes?
- How are staff going to be upskilled to meet the wider range of needs within the school?
- Ensuring adequate post-16 and post-19 provision for the locality.

Many parents in attendance welcomed the proposals for Eresby School and felt that it was a positive and reaffirming move forward. One parent even commented that it was "probably too good to be true". Some thoughtful questions and concerns were raised and parents provided LCC Officers with a good insight into the challenges faced by pupils with SEND in rural localities.

#### The Sandon School and Ambergate Sports College 6<sup>th</sup> March'18

13 friends of the school in attendance.

Event hosted by James Ellis and Stela Plamenova, Executive Head Teachers. Supported by Heather Sandy, Assistant Director, Children's Services, Peter Bell, CEO of the Community Inclusive Trust, Daran Bland and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Those in attendance were provided with a presentation by James Ellis, Stela Plamenova and Heather Sandy outlining the proposed strategy and how the model would be likely to impact these schools specifically. Small group discussions followed, this allowed questions and concerns to be addressed and answered with LA Officers.

#### Key Discussion Points:

- Interested to understand more about the proposed amalgamation of The Sandon School and Ambergate Sports College and how this would impact on the education of the pupils. What would be the benefits and would there be detrimental effects e.g. class sizes.
- Reassurance that the LA was committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Discussion around mainstream schools and their SEND provision – how will the strategy impact them?
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it? Who would run it?
- Is there adequate funding allocated for such wide-scale changes?
- Provision across the two schools is already meeting all needs and confident that the proposals would ensure that they could meet need with better resources and facilities.
- Concerns were raised regarding SEMH provision in the Grantham area; parents were worried about pupils with only SENH needs attending Special Schools.

Many in attendance expressed their enthusiasm for the proposed developments to the Sandon and Ambergate Schools. Some valuable comments were raised regarding managing the proposed amalgamation of two schools effectively and also about the placement of pupils with SEMH in Special Schools.

#### Public Consultation Events

#### LCC Public Consultation – Boston 26<sup>th</sup> Feb'18

Hosted by Debbie Barnes, Director, Children's Services, with presentation of the strategy by Heather Sandy, supported by Special School Leaders and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Attendance - 19 including:

9 Parent/Carers  
8 School Employees  
2 Other Professionals.

Some individuals in attendance had already attended the LPCF Spalding event and raised objections to the changes proposed to Gosberton House Academy at this event. These individuals were familiar to LCC as parent/carers with connections to Gosberton House Academy and the Autism community, campaigning against the proposed strategy.

Key Discussion Points:

- Significant challenge presented regarding the proposed funding; belief that it is inadequate and the proposals are not feasible.
- That there has not been sufficient work undertaken regarding the proposed building work for each school and the proposal is not viable.
- That there has not been sufficient work undertaken with health commissioners to implement the therapy provision identified in the strategy.
- Strong opposition from those in attendance associated with Gosberton House Academy and the Autism community that all needs provision would not provide an acceptable educational environment for pupils with Autism and that there needs should be met within an Autism specialist provision.
- Attendees questioned LCC's motives for the strategy suggesting its priority is reducing transport costs.
- A small number of attendees alleged that undue pressure had been placed on the Head Teacher at Gosberton House Academy to support the plans. Questions were asked about what would happen if Gosberton House Academy did not change to all needs provision.
- Concern that the strategy restricts parental preference.
- Suggested that the strategy was focused on placing all pupils back into mainstream schools.
- Questions rose regarding the provision of Special School satellites e.g. level of mainstream commitment, similarity to historical speech and language units, pupils being forced back into mainstream school.

Discussion at the event was dominated by the questions and opposition presented by those campaigning against the proposed changes to Gosberton House Academy.

LCC Public Consultation - Sleaford  
27<sup>th</sup> Feb'18

Hosted by Debbie Barnes, with presentation of the strategy by Heather Sandy, supported by Special School Head Teachers and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Some individuals in attendance had previously attended the LPCF Spalding event and the LCC Boston event and re-iterated their objections to the proposals for Gosberton House Academy. Also at this event, objections were raised against the proposed strategy and individual LA Officers were targeted with negative comments via placard.

Attendance: 12 including:

9 Parent/Carers  
1 School Staff  
2 Others.

Key Discussion Points:

- Significant challenge presented regarding the proposed funding; that it is inadequate and the proposals are not feasible.
- That there has not been sufficient work undertaken regarding the proposed building work for each school and the proposal are not viable.
- That there has not been sufficient work undertaken with health commissioners to implement the provision identified in the strategy. Inadequate and under-resourced therapy provision would not be able to support all needs provision.
- Strong opposition from those associated with Gosberton House Academy and the Autism community that all needs provision is not an acceptable educational environment for pupils with Autism and that needs should be met within an Autism specialist provision.
- Some individuals accused the LA of promoting its own strategic agenda and not consulting with schools and parents, despite the extensive ongoing consultation.
- Some attendees questioned LCC's motives for the strategy and that its priority is reducing transport costs.
- Questioned the validity of the consultation process, in terms of breadth of consultation, despite the extensive ongoing consultation.
- One attendee alleged that undue pressure had been placed on the Head Teacher at Gosberton House to support the plans.
- Suggestion to extend the age range at Gosberton House.
- Concern that the strategy restricts parental preference.
- Why does the strategy not support the addition of a Special School in Sleaford?
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so.
- Support for collaborative working between education and health
- How are staff going to be upskilled to meet the wider range of needs within the school?

Discussion at the event was dominated by the questions and opposition presented by those campaigning against the proposed changes to Gosberton House Academy.

LCC Public Consultation – Lincoln  
5<sup>th</sup> March'18

Hosted by Debbie Barnes, with presentation of the strategy by Heather Sandy, supported by Special School Leaders and LA Officers. Also present: LPCF Chair and volunteers.

Attendance - 14 including:

5 Parent/Carers

5 School Staff

4 Others.

Key Discussion Points:

- Future plans for St Francis and St Christopher's Schools, regarding governance.
- Likely impact of the proposals on the Lincoln schools?
- Reassurance that the LA were committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Reassurance that placement in Out of Country arrangements would continue, where already in place.
- Discussion around mainstream schools and their SEND provision – how will the strategy impact them?
- Interest in how the satellite provision would be developed and who would be able to access it? How are they going to be different to the autism units previously developed?
- Is there adequate funding allocated for such wide-scale changes?
- How are staff going to be upskilled to meet the wider range of needs within the school? Additional training for mainstream?
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so.
- Concern that the strategy restricts parental preference.
- Discussion regarding the merits of primary and secondary provision and all though provision. Why does the strategy endorse both options?
- It was noted that the language in the report was not autism-friendly and also LCC's engagement with the autism strategy was raised.
- It was raised that some Special Schools were discriminating against pupils identified as having challenging behaviour.

### **LPCF Consultation Events**

Please see Appendix i for a report on the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum consultation events.

#### **4. Consultation Survey**

##### **Introduction**

Two consultation surveys were developed by the LCC Community Engagement team, in conjunction with SNAP Surveys; one specifically for adults and one for children and young people. Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum advised on the design of the survey to ensure it was user-friendly. Links to the surveys were placed on the

dedicated webpage for the strategy, in order to ensure all information was altogether and accessible.

The adult survey asked responders to identify their relationship to/involvement with SEND in order to ascertain levels of support and opposition from specific groups. It also requested four digit postcode information, so geographical clusters of similar opinions could also be identified. This level of information ensured the responders were not identifiable and all information held would be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The children and young people's survey was also accessible via the dedicated webpage and varied only slightly from the adult version. Responders were asked to identify which school they attended to provide data surrounding levels of support or opposition in specific schools. Again, this level of information ensured the responders were not identifiable and all information held would be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Both surveys were design using a five-point Likert scale based on the five key messages of the strategy with an additional question on the need for building work in schools. In addition, in the adult survey, parents were directed to an additional question regarding the likelihood of them requesting a change of school if the strategy is adopted and implemented. All responders were then asked if there was anything else they would like to contribute. Each statement was followed by an open text box providing responders with ample opportunity for free text to ensure their contribution to the consultation could be detailed.

There has been a small number of complaints received about the design of the survey, suggesting bias towards a positive outcome. LCC strongly believes that there was no intention of bias with the survey statements; they were key statements taken directly from the strategy on which the consultation was based. The scaling allowed for respondents to vary their responses from a strongly disagreed position through to a strongly agreed one. The survey also provided free text boxes for respondents to provide additional comments. This has provided a rich source of information for consideration around the consultation. The survey questions were developed in partnership with the Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum who suggested the use of Likert scaling and "smiley faces" as their experience is that parents and carers respond well to this method of questioning and LCC supported this.

The adult survey was completed by 609 responders and the children's survey completed by 58 respondents. As the questions on the surveys varied slightly, the findings from the surveys will be presented separately.

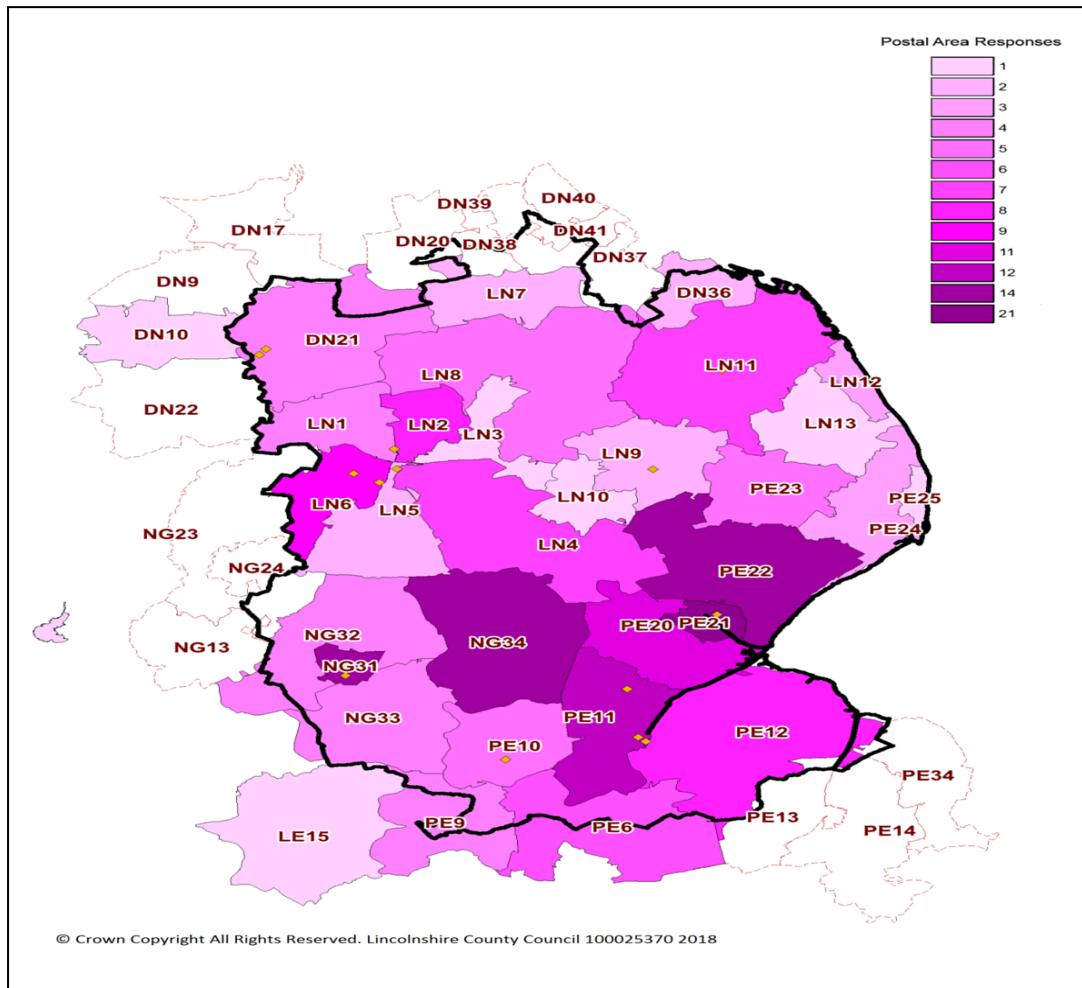
With regards to data confidence, for a target population of 5,000 people, with a reasonably representative spread of respondent category type and geography, we would need 387 responses to give us a 95% level of confidence that views received are representative of the target population, with a 5% margin of error. With 667 responses the surveys confidence margin has been assessed as 99% (+/- 5%).

It should also be noted that some adult responders completed the children's survey though we are unsure as to whether this was intentional or in error. The text boxes

indicate that some responses are clearly from children, some are from adults and some have no narrative in the boxes so we cannot identify the type of responder. Therefore the findings from the children's survey will be presented as they have been received; it cannot be assumed that they fully reflect the opinions of children and young people only.

## Analysis of Survey Responses

### Geographical Distribution of Responses



The adult survey requested the first four characters of postcodes from anyone identifying as a parent and the post code distribution of these surveys are represented on this map. It shows a broad range of responses from across the county with a hotspot of responses around Boston and surrounding postal areas. There is a notable return from the Spalding, Grantham and Sleaford areas too.

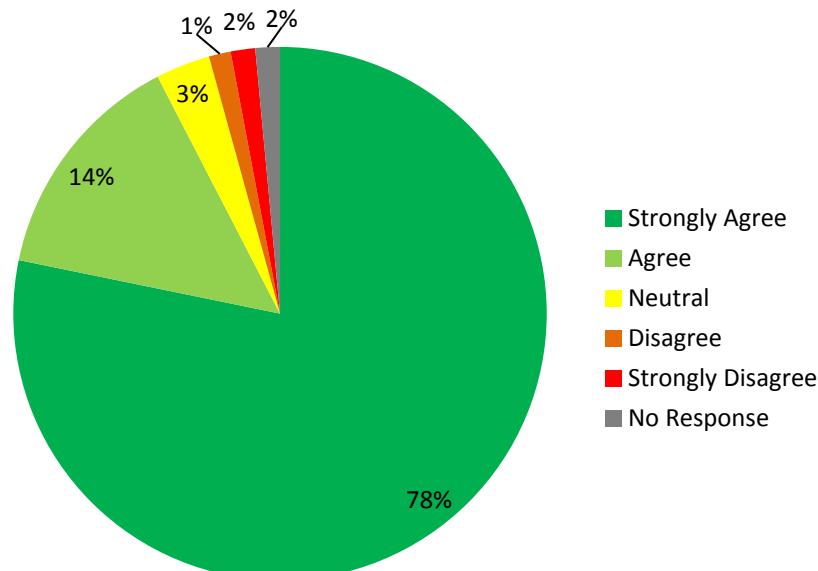
## Adult Responses

For each statement in the survey, a pie chart reflects the overall response to the statement ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly. Alongside this chart is a graph presenting the level of agreement to the statement from each category of respondent. The report highlights some of the recurring themes from the text box responses

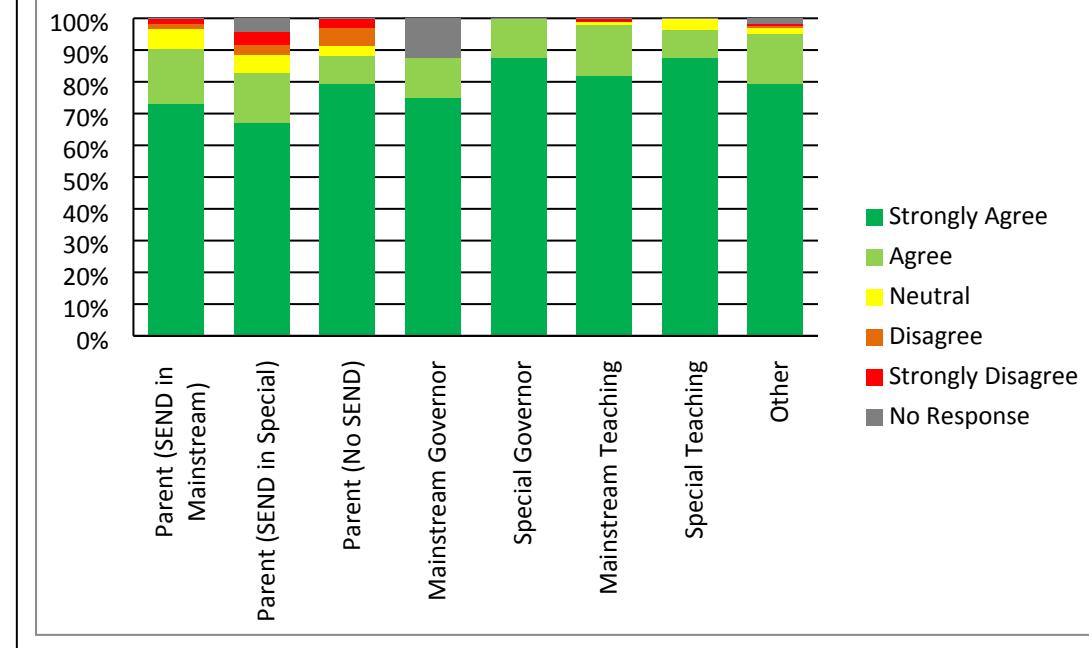
### Statement 1

**Pupils with SEND should be able to attend a Special School as close to home as possible**

#### Overall Response to Statement 1



#### Breakdown: Type of Respondent



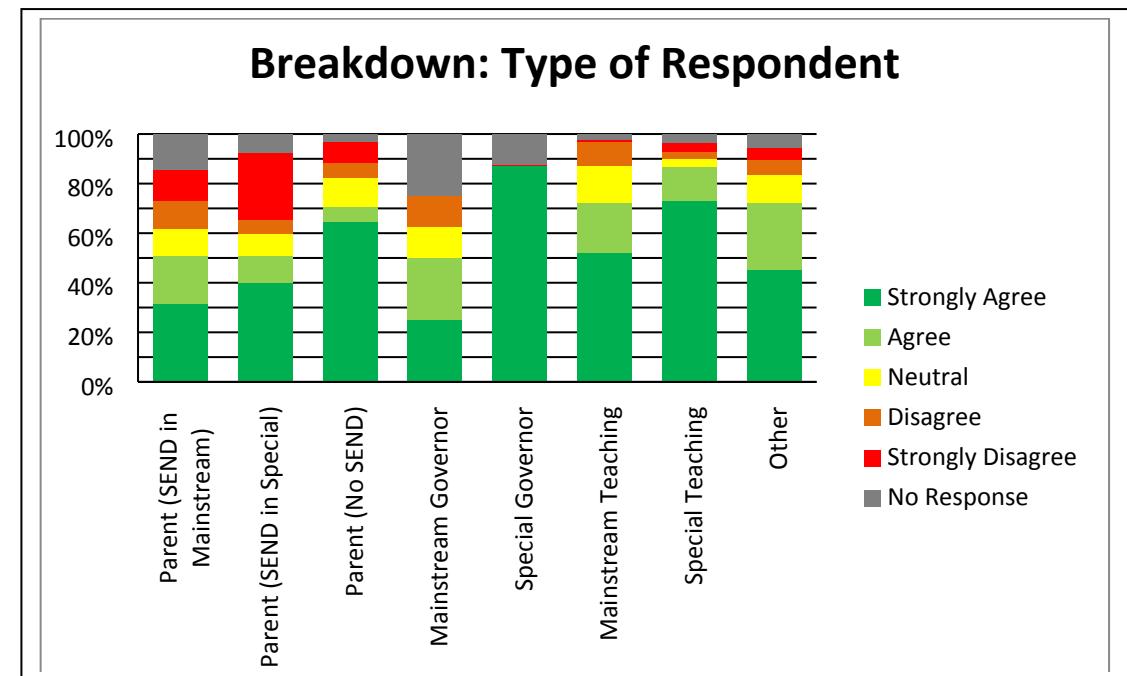
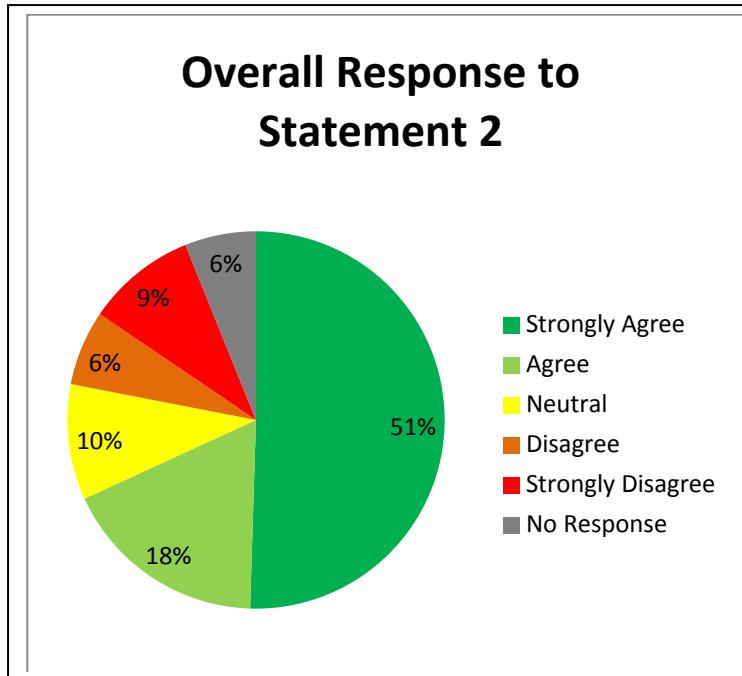
Responses to statement 1 were overwhelmingly positive with 543/597 agreeing strongly and agreeing with the statement. 9 people did not respond to this statement.

With reference to the type of respondent, the group who strongly agreed with this statement the least, only 67% of parents with a child in Special School strongly agreed with this statement. Many who did agree also commented that suitable provision was just as important as location.

597 responded	<b>1. Pupils with SEND should be able to attend a Special School as close to home as possible</b>	
Agree	93%	<p><b>Key Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long journeys to school have a negative impact on pupils and families. It effects energy levels, ability to learn, increased anxiety, undue stress for parent/carers and loss of family experiences.</li> <li>• Pupils with SEND should be able to access a school which is equipped to meet their needs without excessive travel.</li> <li>• Attending a local school allows pupils to be part of their community.</li> <li>• For many respondents, access to the right school with the right facilities and staffing is more important than travelling long journeys to school.</li> <li>• Once the nearest school can meet the needs of all pupils in its community.</li> <li>• More support in mainstream schools for pupils with SEND would enable them to access their education in their local community.</li> <li>• Parental preference should be paramount.</li> <li>• Need to ensure schools have enough capacity for pupils to go to their local school.</li> <li>• What is best for the child is the most important thing. Education standards should not be compromised for this to happen.</li> <li>• There should be a limit on how far a child should have to travel.</li> <li>• The needs of pupils with Autism are different and therefore they cannot be met in a school which meets all needs – journey time is not the most important factor.</li> <li>• Once no child is forced to change school for this to happen.</li> </ul>
Neutral	3%	
Disagree	3%	

## Statement 2

**Special Schools should be fully inclusive, with pupils with all types of needs and disabilities educated together**



Statement 2 was the second least supported statement across the whole survey, with only 69% of responders agreeing strongly or agreeing with the statement.

From the type of respondent breakdown, it is clear that parents with children with SEND in both special and mainstream schools had some reservations about the proposals for fully inclusive Special Schools, with only 50% agreeing with the statement.

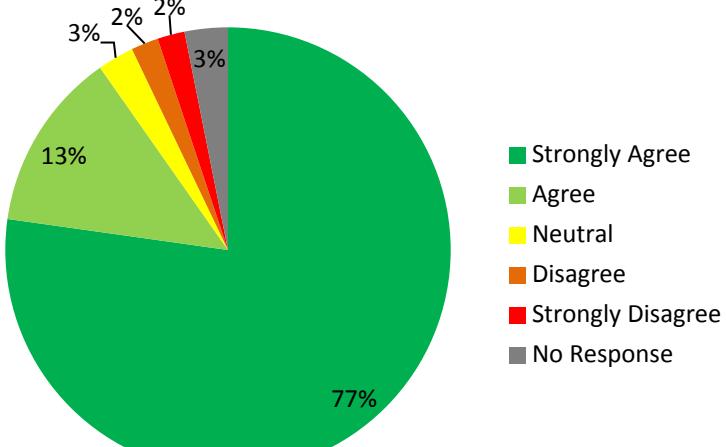
However, all Special School Governors who responded supported the principal.

569 responded	<b>1. Special Schools should be fully inclusive, with pupils with all types of needs and disabilities educated together</b>	
Agree	69%	<b>Key Themes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully inclusive schools represent the variety of society and encourage greater acceptance and understanding.</li> <li>• Pupils with SEND do not fit into categories; schools should be able to meet the individual needs of pupils in their local community.</li> <li>• Inclusive schools need to have the right facilities and resources to meet all needs.</li> <li>• Inclusive schools need to have the right staffing with the right skills and experience to meet all needs.</li> <li>• Agreement in principle but the safety of all pupils must be the priority.</li> <li>• Must be to the benefit of all pupils.</li> <li>• Could be very challenging for schools and staff to manage. Difficult to implement.</li> <li>• Pupils should be educated in an environment which best suits their needs; this could be together in a school but taught in classes with pupils with similar needs.</li> <li>• Teach abilities and similar ages together but provide opportunity for integration throughout the school day.</li> <li>• SEND education should not be one size fits all and the needs of individual pupils must be met.</li> <li>• Children with ASD and other social, learning and communication needs require a completely different educational environment to other pupils with SEND. This specialism must remain an option for parents.</li> <li>• Risk of diluting specialisms.</li> </ul>
Neutral	10%	
Disagree	15%	
Page 98		

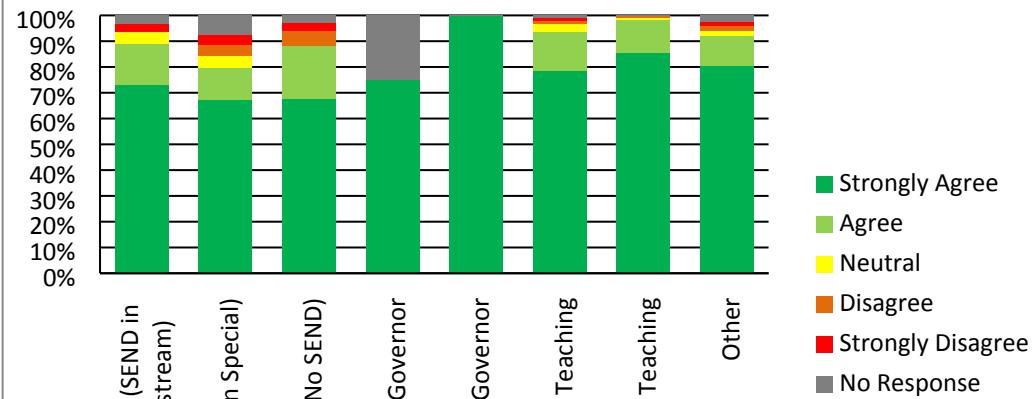
### Statement 3

**Wherever possible, Lincolnshire pupils with SEND should be educated in Lincolnshire**

#### Overall Response to Statement 3



#### Breakdown: Type of Respondent



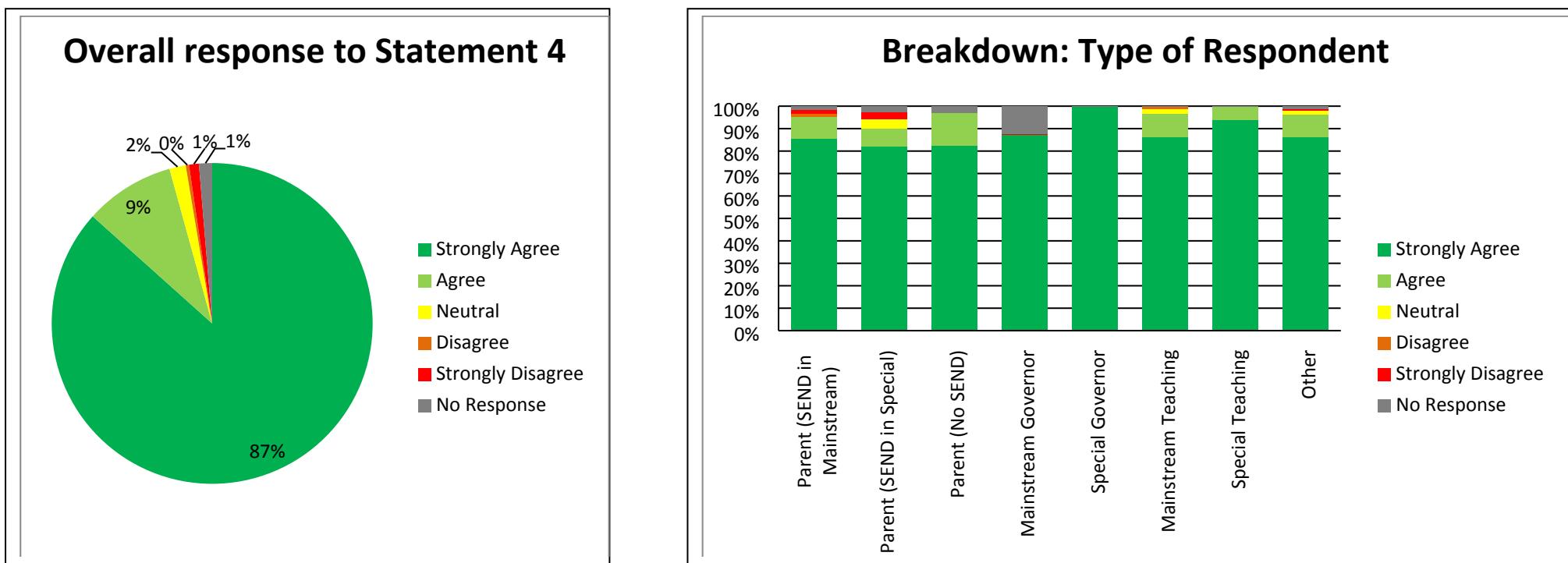
The principle of educating Lincolnshire pupils within Lincolnshire was well supported in the survey. Overall, 90% of respondents agreed with the statement.

Across the range of respondent, those in agreement/strong agreement varied from 79% to 100%. Perhaps understandably, parents of pupils attending Special School agreed with this statement least as some will have children who need to access specialist Out of County provision or children attending a Special School across the county border.

587 responded	<b>3. Wherever possible, Lincolnshire pupils with SEND should be educated in Lincolnshire</b>	
Agree	90%	<p><b>Key Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lincolnshire schools should be able to provide the right education for all of its pupils.</li> <li>• Educating children a long way from their home and families can cause significant distress and may be detrimental to the family.</li> <li>• Being educated out of county can affect social and life skills and makes maintaining family life difficult.</li> <li>• The cost of educating pupils in out of county provision could be re-invested into improving Special Schools in Lincolnshire.</li> <li>• Where pupils live close to the county border and a school in another county is nearer, this should be accessible.</li> <li>• For pupils with very specialist needs, out of county schools may provide the most appropriate education.</li> <li>• Pupils should go to the most appropriate setting to meet their needs.</li> </ul>
Neutral	3%	
Disagree	4%	

Statement 4

**Children and young people with SEND should have access to the right education, health and care provision regardless of where they go to school**



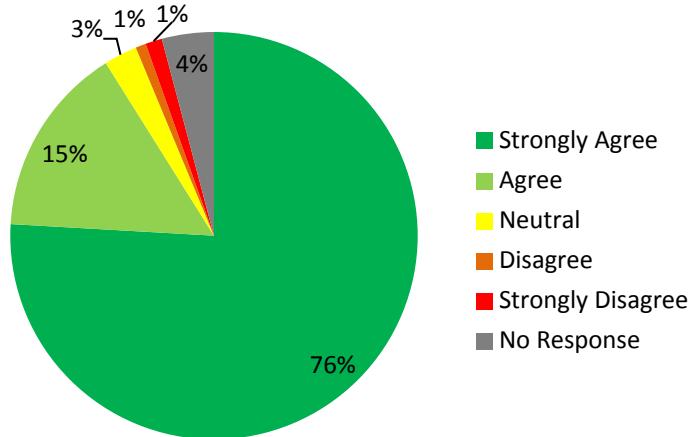
This statement received overwhelming support across all surveys, with only 1% strongly disagreeing. Across the range of respondents, the primary message of "right education, in the right place at the right time, as close as possible to home" was well supported by between 90% - 100% of respondents.

598 responded	<b>4. Children and young people with SEND should have access to the right education, health and care provision regardless of where they go to school</b>
Agree	96%
Neutral	2%
Disagree	1%
Page 102	<p><b>Key Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This should be an absolute given for all pupils with SEND in Lincolnshire, whether they attend mainstream or Special School.</li> <li>• Every child has a right to an education that meets their needs.</li> <li>• Many Special Schools are already providing the right education but need additional resources regarding health and care provision.</li> <li>• The Education, Health and Care Plan process should ensure all schools provide this for pupils with SEND.</li> <li>• Equity of provision is essential and schools should have equitable access to health and therapeutic provisions.</li> <li>• Education and health provision needs to be integrated.</li> <li>• This is not possible in all needs schools; the right education should be specialist provision for pupils with ASD.</li> <li>• Getting the right education, health and care provision should not be a "fight" for parent/carers.</li> <li>• Schools should be identifying what support and resources are required to meet all needs.</li> </ul>

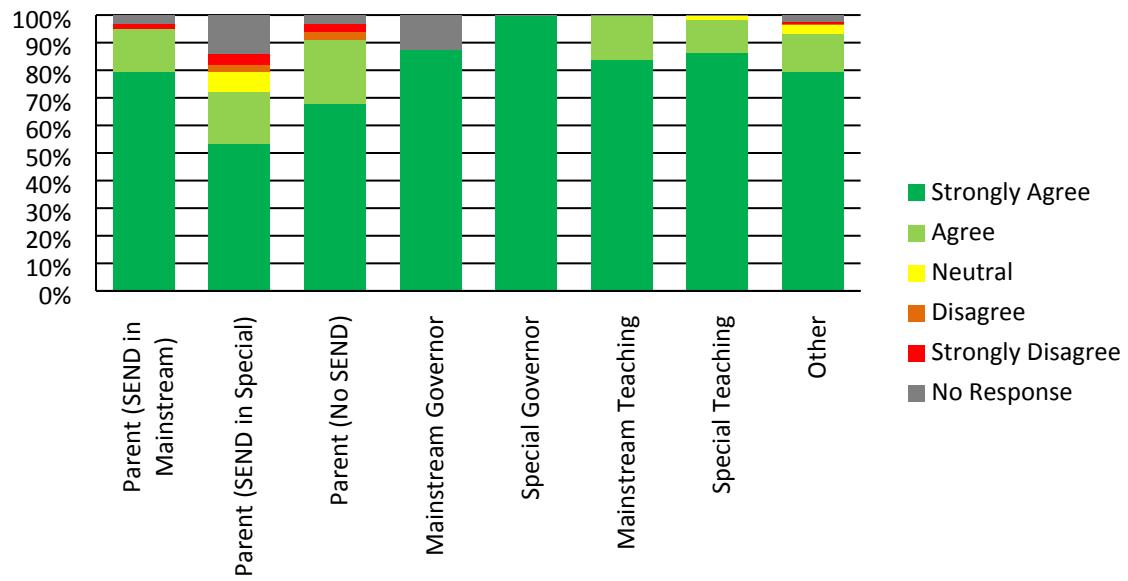
## Statement 5

**Special Schools and mainstream schools should work together so that pupils with SEND receive good quality education in the right school at the right time for them.**

**Overall Response to Statement 5**



**Breakdown: Type of Responder**



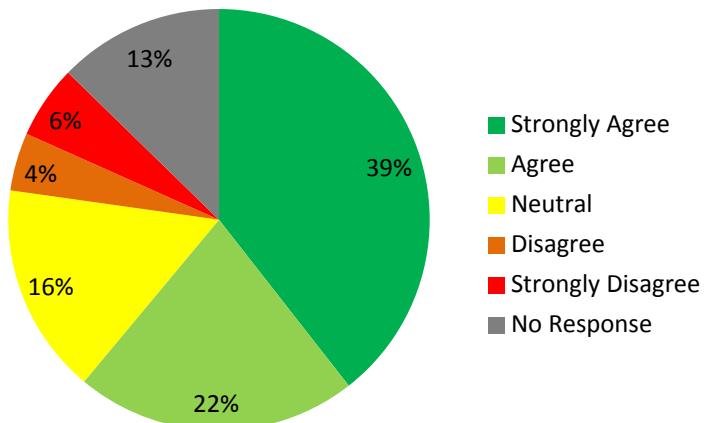
The survey saw overwhelming support from the mainstream school respondents for the statement relating to greater shared working across the sector. 71% of parents with children in Special School agreed with this statement and those who did not agree highlighted concerns regarding mainstream schools ability to meet the needs of pupils with SEND; some citing negative experiences.

581 responded	<b>5. Special Schools and mainstream schools should work together so that pupils with SEND receive good quality education in the right school at the right time for them</b>
Agree	91%
Neutral	3%
Disagree	2%
<p><b>Key Themes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater integration and collaboration across mainstream and Special Schools would provide pupils with SEND with more social and academic opportunities.</li> <li>• Flexibility across the sector would support pupils who need access to the mainstream curriculum with the support of Special School staff.</li> <li>• Staff could benefit from closer working by sharing knowledge and experience. This would benefit pupils across both types of school.</li> <li>• Greater collaboration between schools would support inclusion and break down barriers.</li> <li>• Concerns regarding the additional pressures on mainstream schools and whether pupils with SEND are deemed a priority.</li> <li>• Concerns about the impact this may have on mainstream pupils.</li> <li>• Support for current Outreach initiatives such as the Working Together Team and the Physical Disability Outreach Service.</li> <li>• Needs to be directed by the needs of the individual pupils; not a blanket approach to accessing mainstream.</li> <li>• Idea needs to be supported by additional staffing and resources.</li> <li>• Concerns around bullying of pupils with SEND; others felt this would increase acceptance.</li> <li>• Supported transition between schools is key.</li> </ul>	

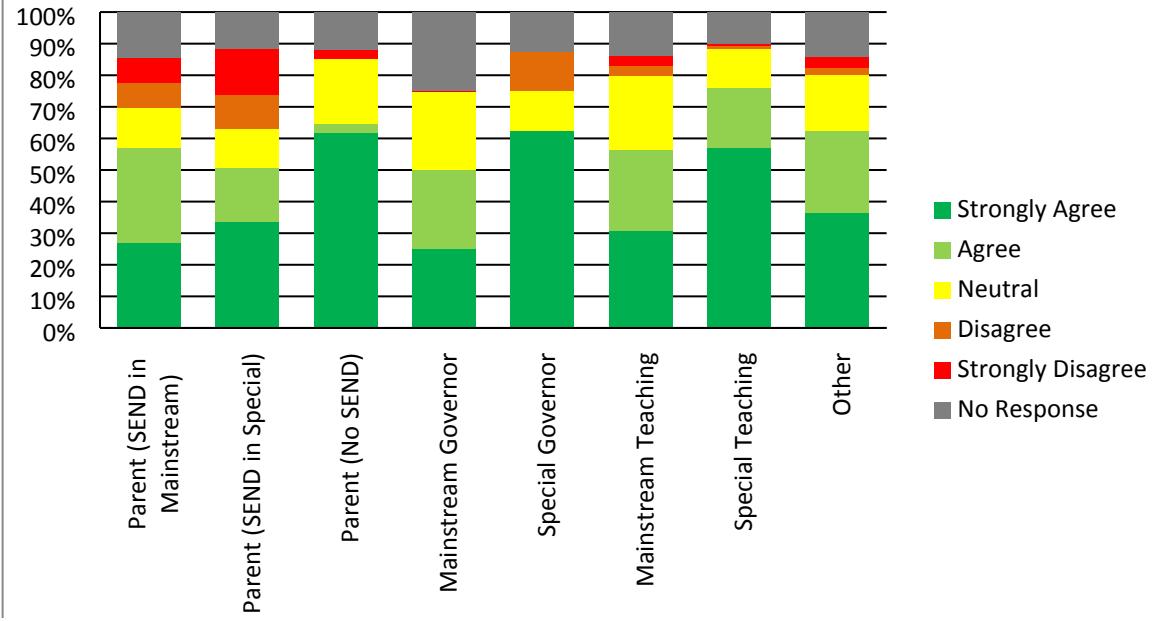
## Statement 6

If the strategy is adopted it will mean significant investment and development of existing Special Schools. Building work could cause disruption in your school.

### Responses to question 9



### Respondent Percentages for Q9



Statement 6 was the least supported statement across the whole survey, with only 61% of responders agreeing strongly or agreeing with the statement. It is clear from the responses that any building works within schools will need to be managed in a way which causes minimal disruption to pupils and their education.

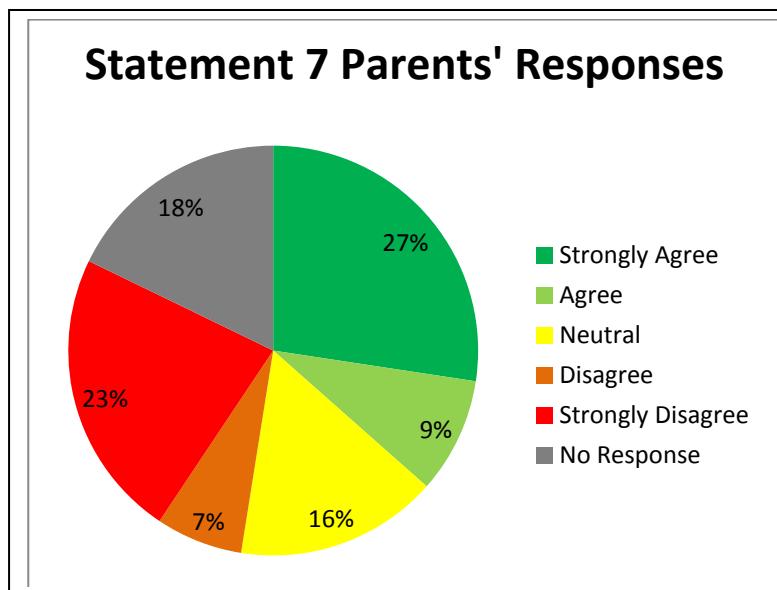
529 responded	<b>6. If the strategy is adopted it will mean significant investment and development of existing Special Schools. Building work could cause disruption in your school. (This statement asked people to rate their support for potentially disruptive change)</b>
Agree	61%
Neutral	19%
Disagree	10%

**Key Themes:**

- High level of support for this as the majority of Special Schools require additional facilities and improvements to their premises. Viewed as a positive step forward.
- If the school is going to benefit from better facilities, this would be acceptable.
- Needs to be project managed carefully with minimal disruption to pupils with SEND.
- Good communication with parents and pupils about the planned developments.
- Valuable suggestions provided from respondents about how to complete the work with minimal disruption.
- Concerns for pupils with SEND and the potential distress building work may cause.

Statement 7: Parents only

**If the strategy was adopted and Special Schools were ready to provide for all needs, how likely would you be to request a move for your child to the nearest Special School?**

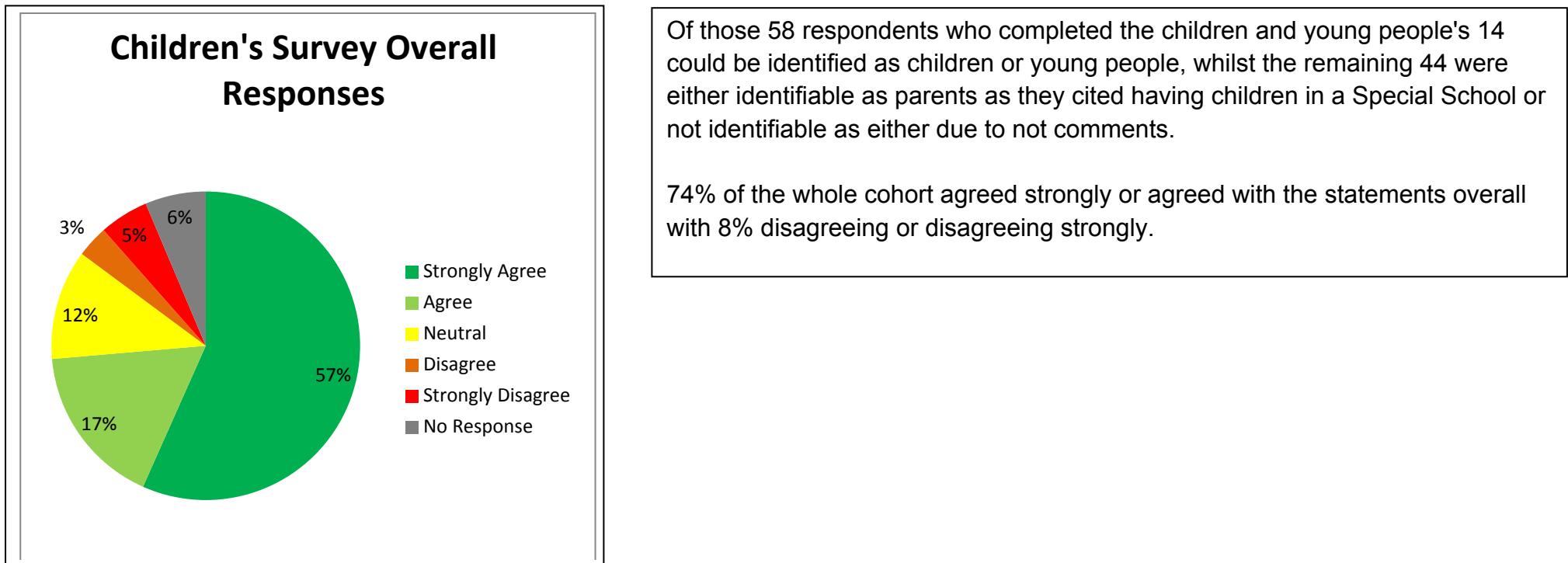


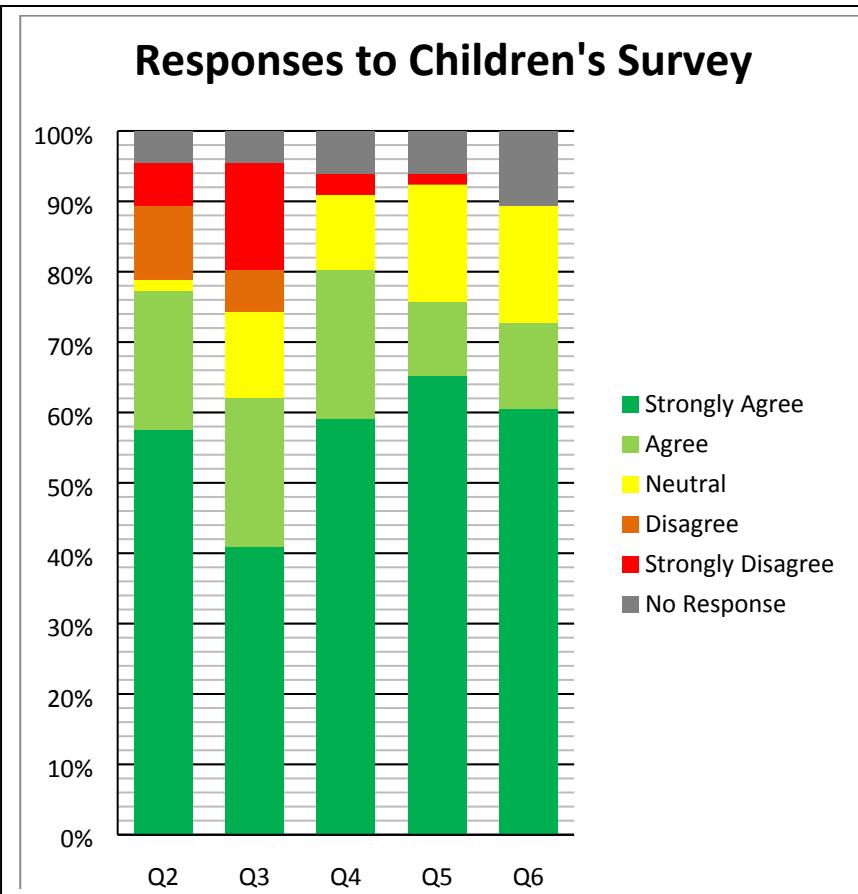
This statement was included to ascertain how parents felt about the prospect of a change of school for pupils with SEND, if a nearer school could meet need. It is clear, with only 36% of respondents agreeing with the statement, that for many pupils change of school is not a consideration at this stage.

199 responded		<b>If the strategy was adopted and Special Schools were ready to provide for all needs, how likely would you be to request a move for your child to the nearest Special School?</b>
Agree	36%	<b>Key Themes:</b>
Neutral	16%	
Disagree	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the proposed strategy and some parents expressed that they would be keen to move their children to a school closer to home, if it could meet their needs.</li> <li>• Support for the proposed strategy but some parents expressed that they would not seek to change their child's education setting as they are happy and settled.</li> <li>• Concerns regarding transport allocation if parents chose to move to a nearer school.</li> </ul>

## Children and Young People's Survey

As highlighted previously, the contributions to the children and young people's survey cannot be considered as the view of young people as a number of adults completed this survey. This was apparent from the comments within the text boxes. Therefore only a brief overview of findings from this survey will be presented as it cannot be deemed reliable in presenting the views of its intended cohort.





Statement Q2: Children and young people with special education needs and disabilities should be able to go to a school as close to home as possible.

Statement Q3: Special Schools should include children and young people with all kinds of needs and disabilities taught together.

Statement Q4: Wherever possible children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities who live in Lincolnshire should be able to go to school in Lincolnshire.

Statement Q5: Children and young people with special education needs and disabilities should be able to get the right education, health and care provision no matter where they go to school.

Statement Q6: Special Schools and mainstream schools should work together so that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities get a good quality education in the right school at the right time for them.

## Survey Outcome

The consultation survey was completed by 667 respondents and the contributions have provided LCC and Special School Leaders with a valuable insight into the experiences of those associated with SEND.

Overall, the survey has indicated that there is considerable support for the proposed strategy, with all key strategic messages being supported by between 61% and 96% of respondents. The only statement which was not supported by the majority was where parents were asked to identify if they would consider moving their child to a nearer school – this was met with significant opposition. However, as the proposed strategy does not require any pupil to move schools against their wishes, this should not be a concern if the strategy is adopted.

From the qualitative responses to each statement, some key themes emerged as highlighted in the tables above. These key themes mirror the discussions across the consultation.

Key Themes from the survey:

- The importance of pupils having access to the right education, as close as possible to home – these two priorities should not be exclusive.
- Some opposition to All Needs provision from schools required to make the most significant change to need catered for.
- Concern about how all needs will be met in one setting– schools must have the right resources and staff training.
- Pupils with SEND need a system of education which meets all of their individual needs, both in Mainstream and Special Schools.
- Access to the right health and care provision, regardless of where pupils are educated.
- Parents of children and young people face too many barriers and challenges when it comes to getting their loved ones the right interventions and education, including long journeys to school.
- The pressure on availability of Special School places and the changing needs of pupils with SEND means that the current system is unsustainable.

Where the survey did present concerns and challenges, they related mostly to the proposed changes to All Needs provision. Strong opposition was presented through the survey comments, by a small number of respondents, to the proposed changes for Gosberton House Academy, claiming these changes would significantly diminish the standard of education provided.

## **5. SEND Mailbox and other methods of consultation**

In order to ensure that the consultation provided ample opportunity for interested parties to make their contributions, a variety of other consultation mechanisms were provided. Comments and further questions were invited via the SEND Communities mailbox and all emails received through this route were acknowledged and detailed responses provided where specific questions were submitted. One submission of

questions did not have any contact detail to respond to, so these have been included in the "Building Communities of Specialist Provision: Consultation Responses".

In total, 25 individuals submitted 37 emails to the SEND Communities inbox, within the following categories:

Schools = 4 respondents.

College = 1 respondent.

Parent/Carers = 15 respondents.

National Deaf Children's Society = 1 respondent.

School Governor = 1 respondent.

Linkage Trust = 1 respondent.

Member of Parliament = 1 respondent.

Not specified in email = 1 respondent.

The key themes within the correspondence received via email and letter have been summarised in the table below.

All emails directly contributing to the consultation have been made available to the Executive Councillor to support decision making processes.

## Summary of contributions via the SEND mailbox

Issue's Raised	Number of responders
Responder opposed to the proposals as specialisms as the specific needs of children with Autism are significantly different and require a completely different environment and learning support. All needs provision will dilute the standards within specialist schools.	13/25
Responder opposed to the proposals as specialisms as the specific needs of children with physical and medically complex disabilities are significantly different and require a completely different environment and learning support. All needs provision will dilute the standards within specialist schools.	3/25
Responder opposes all needs provision and suggests that Lincoln should be all needs across 2 schools.	1/25
Responder opposed to the strategy as it removes parental preference.	4/25
Responder believes that the right school trumps any travel concerns.	4/25
Responder believes that more attention needs to be given to educational achievement, Aspirational academic opportunities for those that can without 'rounding down'. This should also include improved 16-19 provision.	4/25
Responder believes that assessment and implementation of EHC plans for pupils with Autism, in mainstream settings needs improving, as does access to a range of therapies.	5/25
Responder believes that pupils should not be placed in private educational settings due to concerns about quality and safeguarding.	1/25
Responder believes that the proposals are based on inaccurate data.	3/25
Responder believes that increased capacity would be welcome.	1/25
Responder is concerned that pupils will be forced to change schools under the proposals.	2/25
Responder believes that, if school does not move to all needs provision, that funding will be withdrawn or the school will be massively disadvantaged.	3/25
Responder believes that the identified funding allocation is inadequate and the proposed model cannot be implemented for monies stated. Challenge to costings and whether the model is viable?	6/25
Responder is concerned that the strategy does not identify how the specific needs of deaf children will be met.	1/25
Responder welcomes the improved links with mainstream schools, including satellites. How can they support this?	4/25
Responders strongly believe this investment should be aimed at developing more specialist autism schools or, at least, extending the age range of Gosberton House Academy.	9/25
Responder believes that the strategy does not do enough to address the mental health needs of children.	1/25

Responder believes that properly managed transition is a good thing and pupils who wish to change schools should be well-supported.	1/25
Responder believes that the strategy is just a money saving exercise.	2/25
Responder does not believe that research supports all needs provision. The LA has not done enough research to back up the strategy.	2/25
Responder agrees with principle of nearest school to fit child's needs.	1/25

## Third Sector Contributions

Consultation responses have been submitted from two third sector providers; The National Deaf Children's Society (NCDS) and Linkage Community Trust. Both are service providers in Lincolnshire and have a keen interest in the proposals within the strategy.

The National Deaf Children's Society contacted the SEND Project Office by telephone on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018 to discuss the proposed strategy further and consider how it may impact deaf children and young people. A formal response was submitted to the consultation on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2018, raising six key concerns/questions:

1. Reassurance that parental preference is paramount and that no family would be placed at a disadvantage if they chose to remain at their current school.
2. Reassurance that Out of County provision would continue to be available where it provides the most appropriate education for children and young people.
3. Concern that the strategy promotes a "return to mainstream" approach and that this will have a detrimental effect on Special School viability.
4. The organisation requires more detail regarding the planned capital investment program and reassurance that the needs of deaf pupils will be included in the plans.
5. Concern that the strategy does not specifically identify a core offer for deaf children.
6. The organisation requires further information regarding the workforce development plans within the proposal.

The LA has responded to these concerns via telephone discussion with NCDS Regional Director, Martin Thacker with both the SEND Project Officer and Service Manager - SEND, LCC.

The Linkage Community Trust submitted their contribution to the consultation on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018 after engaging in discussions with their parent/carers, their education committee and Linkage Trustees and attending a number of consultation events. The following comments/concerns were raised:

1. Expressed concerns regarding the limited opportunities for transition in the proposed model. It was felt that the experience of children and young people with SEND should reflect the same opportunities and experiences of pupils in mainstream and that transition from primary to secondary to further education can be beneficial for individual growth and development.
2. Parents/Carers were particularly interested in how the strategy sought to support pupils accessing mainstream and welcomed the concept of satellite provision presented once they supported inclusion and integration.
3. The Linkage Community Trusts welcomes the strategy as an opportunity and that no pupil would be required to change school.
4. The organisation raised concerns that the strategy assumes pupils will remain in school post-16 and does not fully address the importance of specialist provision for young people aged 16-19 years.
5. The organisation raised the issue of early identification of mental health in pupils and suggested the strategy could address this in more detail.

6. The organisation expressed concerns around the challenges presented to schools in educating All Needs in one setting and stressed the importance of upskilling staff.
7. The organisation expressed concerns that parental choice would be impacted by the strategy. Whilst acknowledging the detrimental effect of excessive travel school allocation has on some pupils, Linkage Community Trust sought reassurance that parental choice would be respected.

The organisation welcomed the opportunity to work in partnership to fulfil the aspirations of the strategy and stressed the importance of children and young people receiving an educational programme which meets individual's needs.

#### Additional Opportunities

In line with Government advice on consultations, it was deemed appropriate to offer alternative methods of communication, most appropriate to the group being consulted with.

A dedicated telephone line was provided enable interested parties to contact the SEND Project Office and make their contributions. One call was received via this method, requesting additional information.

Two interested parties requested and received a telephone call from the Senior Project Officer to discuss aspects of the strategy in further detail. Both parties subsequently submitted their contribution to the consultation in writing, based on the reassurances provided during the telephone discussion.

### **7. Mainstream School Consultation**

The proposed strategy encourages greater collaboration between mainstream and Special Schools, particularly with the proposed Special School satellite pilot which will see enhanced SEND provision, led by Special School staff, within mainstream schools. In order to ensure mainstream school leaders are fully aware of the proposals which may impact on their provision, opportunities for consultation were accessed.

The LCC Spring Leadership briefings were held in early March'18 at venues across the county and Heather Sandy presented the proposed strategy and model to Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Special School Leaders from 229 schools.

Comments and questions were welcomed as were expressions of interest for the Special School satellite provision pilot. 11 schools have since submitted their expressions of interest for the satellite pilots.

#### Key Discussion Points:

- Timeline and implementation.
- Request for more information regarding the proposed Special School satellite provision.
- Details of the capital investment programme.

- More information regarding the governance of the proposed new free school.
- Importance of parental choice in allocating a Special School.

The strategy has been well received by School Leaders and support for the project was expressed at all Leadership Briefings. One Head Teacher spoke as a grandparent and welcomed the proposed changes and LCC's commitment to pupils with SEND.

In addition, the proposed strategy has been presented for consideration and consultation at both the Lincolnshire Learning Partnership Board (LLPB) and Schools Forum. The LLPB has approved the proposed strategy and fully endorses the vision for greater collaboration across the sector.

The strategy was presented to the Schools Forum on 18<sup>th</sup> Jan'18 and the following comments were submitted to the consultation.

Key discussion points:

- Timescale and implementation.
- Importance of a recruitment analysis to ensure adequate and "best possible" staffing provision for Special Schools.
- Need to ensure mainstream commitment to the strategy for it to be effective.

## **8. LCC Response to Consultation**

Lincolnshire County Council is fully committed to ensuring that this consultation process is conducted in line with DfE recommendations, in an open, fair and responsive manner. LCC has endeavoured to respond to all direct communication (with the exception of the surveys) to ensure all interested parties had a clear understanding of the proposed strategy and their concerns addressed.

Unfortunately, there has still been a significant amount of misinformation and rumour associated with the strategy, which has encouraged strong opposition to the proposals from some members of the Autistic community and friends of Gosberton House Academy, as highlighted in this document.

In order to address the concerns and questions raised throughout the consultation, LCC has published its response to the key discussion points presented. This document has been published on the dedicated webpage [www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDCommunities](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDCommunities) .

## **9. Media and Social Media Coverage**

A comprehensive communication plan was developed to support the period of consultation, ensuring a wide range of potentially interested parties were made aware of the proposed strategy and opportunities to consult. The strategy was publicised across a range of local media and social media outlets. A media briefing was held by Cllr Bradwell, Deputy Leader , LCC and Debbie Barnes, Director, Children's Services to launch the consultation on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and

subsequent articles and social media messages were published throughout to ensure the consultation remained high in the public's awareness.

LCC has presented the proposed strategy and consultation opportunities through the social media channels of Facebook and Twitter, regular reminders were issued through these forums to find out more about the strategy and to encourage people to engage with the consultation process. These forums were not used to respond to any challenges or questions raised throughout the consultation period.

### Petitions

Lincolnshire County Council has received two petitions regarding the proposed strategy; one in support of the strategy and one opposing the specific proposed changes to Gosberton House Academy.

#### The Safeguarding Autism Provision Petition (Gosberton House)

This petition opposed the proposed changes to Gosberton House Academy and was submitted on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018, five weeks after the consultation period had ended and outside of LCC's petition schedule. This was reviewed by Legal Services, LCC who advised that the petition could still be considered as a contribution item to the consultation. This petition was forwarded to the Lincolnshire Education Trust on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018 to be considered as part of the Gosberton House Academy consultation.

The petition has been supported by 5610 signatories from the following locations:

- 40% Lincolnshire residents.
- 58% Other UK residents.
- 2% Non-UK residents.

The petition has been reviewed by LA Officers and significant concerns have been raised regarding the level of misinformation presented within the preamble.

- **The petition was addressed to Coralie Cross as Chair of LPCF.** LPCF are neither the decision maker for the strategy nor can they campaign on behalf of their members.
- **LCC are proposing changes to the school.** In line with DfE guidelines, all significant changes to an academy must be proposed by the Academy Trust and can only be approved by the Regional Schools Commissioner on behalf of the DfE. LCC is neither the proposer nor decision maker for academies.
- **The strategy proposes to "make one size fit all" for Special Schools.** Special School leaders have worked with LPCF to design a Special School system which has the facilities and resources, through £40 million capital investment, to meet the individual needs of all pupils in their local community. All needs provision does not equate to generalised provision; it means that schools will have a greater bank of resources and personnel equipped to educate a wider range of pupils with SEND. Individuality and the very specific needs of pupils are catered for within the county's existing All Needs schools and this will be central to the proposed model.

Petitioners argue that All Needs schools cannot meet the needs of pupils with Autism. At present there are 418 pupils with a primary need of Autism educated in Special Schools; 95 pupils attend Gosberton House Academy therefore 323 pupils with a primary need of Autism are educated in the county's other Special Schools. Pupils with Autism are already being educated in Lincolnshire Special Schools, having their individual needs met alongside pupils with other needs and disabilities.

- "**The belief that there is a £5 million deficit which schools will be expected to fund themselves**". The government has provided revenue and capital funding to support Local Authorities to make capital investment in provision for pupils with SEND, which with earmarked capital funding within the Council's capital grants and academies also accessing capital grant funding for improvements it will enable the strategy to be fulfilled. Community Inclusive Trust to date has been successful in obtaining Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) for three of their academies to support the implementation of this strategy. Schools will not be expected to fund the proposed development of their premises as this will be funded by the allocated capital investment program, though opportunities to access CIF will be encouraged and supported.

Revenue funding of £2m has been earmarked to support the implementation of this strategy from the Dedicated Schools Grant underspend following Schools Forum support – this is to support training, start-up costs, transitional support etc. Further financial modelling work will be undertaken with revised funding requirements discussed with Schools Forum upon the work streams reviews being concluded.

The Special Schools funding formula will provide funding levels to meet the educational needs of pupils, and the formula is responsive to the changing landscape of pupil's needs and school characteristics.

- "**Gosberton House Academy should be able to retain its NAS Accreditation if it agrees to move to all needs**". In every discussion with Special School leaders, LCC has recognised the excellent standard of education provided to pupils with SEND by all of Lincolnshire's Special Schools. LCC is committed to supporting Gosberton House Academy to retain its NAS accreditation and will also support all Special Schools to achieve this standard, as part of the planned workforce development strategy.
- "**In order to move to all needs provision; the school would require a separate block to educate pupils with severe learning difficulties and physical disabilities**". Throughout the consultation LCC has informed all parent/carers that the allocated £40 million capital investment program will provide additional facilities in order for all schools to be able to meet a wider range of needs. This will include additional facilities and resources at Gosberton House Academy, specifically to meet the needs of pupils with PD and PMLD. However, the capital investment program will not support the segregation and isolation of pupils with differing needs and will work with each school individually to ensure the enhanced facilities will be in place to meet the individual needs of all pupils.

- **Expansion of age to 14 years.** This option has been considered by Special School Leaders and Gosberton House Academy but current demand does not indicate a specific need to extend the age range of this academy. In addition, the SEND vision for Lincolnshire is for pupils to be able to access their education as close to home as possible and extending the age range of Gosberton House Academy would have little impact on achieving this vision.
- **"Pupils with all needs and disabilities would be taught in the same classroom".** This has never been cited as part of the strategy. Schools which currently meet All Need do so by teaching pupils in classes with similar needs and encouraging integration at different times during the school day.

Whilst the strength of feeling presented in this petition must be acknowledged, it is important to recognise that its opposition relates only to the changes proposed for one school. Of the 14 Special Schools involved in the strategy, the opposition petition addresses only the proposals for Gosberton House Academy.

The "Help all special need's children in Lincolnshire by supporting the new SEND proposal" petition was signed by 217 people from the following locations:

- 40% Lincolnshire residents.
- 60% UK residents (location not always specified).

This petition was raised as a forum for parent/carers to log their support for the strategy, in response to the challenges witnessed at the LPCF consultation event in Spalding.

### **Parliamentary Correspondence**

Correspondence regarding the proposed strategy has been received by either LCC or Special School Leaders from four MP's:

- Mr John Hayes MP for South Holland and The Deepings attended the Spalding LPCF consultation event to express his opposition to the proposed changes to Gosberton House Academy and the perceived SEND transport budget reduction. He also communicated his opposition via letter to Cllr Mrs Patricia Bradwell, who has addressed his concerns.
- Edward Leigh MP for Gainsborough and Horncastle wrote to Richard Wills, Interim Chief Executive, to express his support for John Hayes MP.
- Karen Lee MP for Lincoln wrote to Cllr Bradwell, on behalf of one of her constituents to raise concerns about All Needs provision in Lincoln and the lack of Autism specific provision.

### **10. Conclusion**

The Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy has undergone public scrutiny in an extensive and thorough consultation process, which provided all interested parties with ample opportunity to express their support or opposition. The

consultation process has been highly emotive for some parties and the prospect of significant change for one school has been vehemently resisted.

Contributions to the consultation have been large in number, across the wide range of opportunities, with 667 responses to surveys, 236 people attending the consultation events and 25 respondents submitting comments and additional questions via email.

All consultation events have been informative and generated valuable and insightful discussions. As can be seen from the comprehensive summary of each event, discussion around the strategy and proposed changes for each school have been facilitated, with many parent/carers and school staff seeking reassurance over some specific issues and many key themes emerging. These key themes and the LA's responses to frequently asked questions have been addressed in the Public Consultation Feedback document and include:

- How did the LA/School propose to ensure all pupils would have their needs fully met within an all needs setting?
- Reassurances that the strategy did not support the blanket return of pupils to mainstream school.
- Reassurances that the LA was fully committed to ensuring that no pupil would be forced to change schools.
- Considerable interest in how the satellite provision would be developed.
- What are the funding arrangements for the proposals and would the allocated amount be sufficient?
- When the strategy was going to be implemented and what would the capital investment programme bring to individual schools?
- Reassurance that there would not be any changes to the transport policy and that those who currently receive transport would continue to do so.
- Arrangements for the proposed free school in Lincoln.
- How was the health offer for each school going to improve under the proposals?
- Reassurance that parental preference would not diminish.

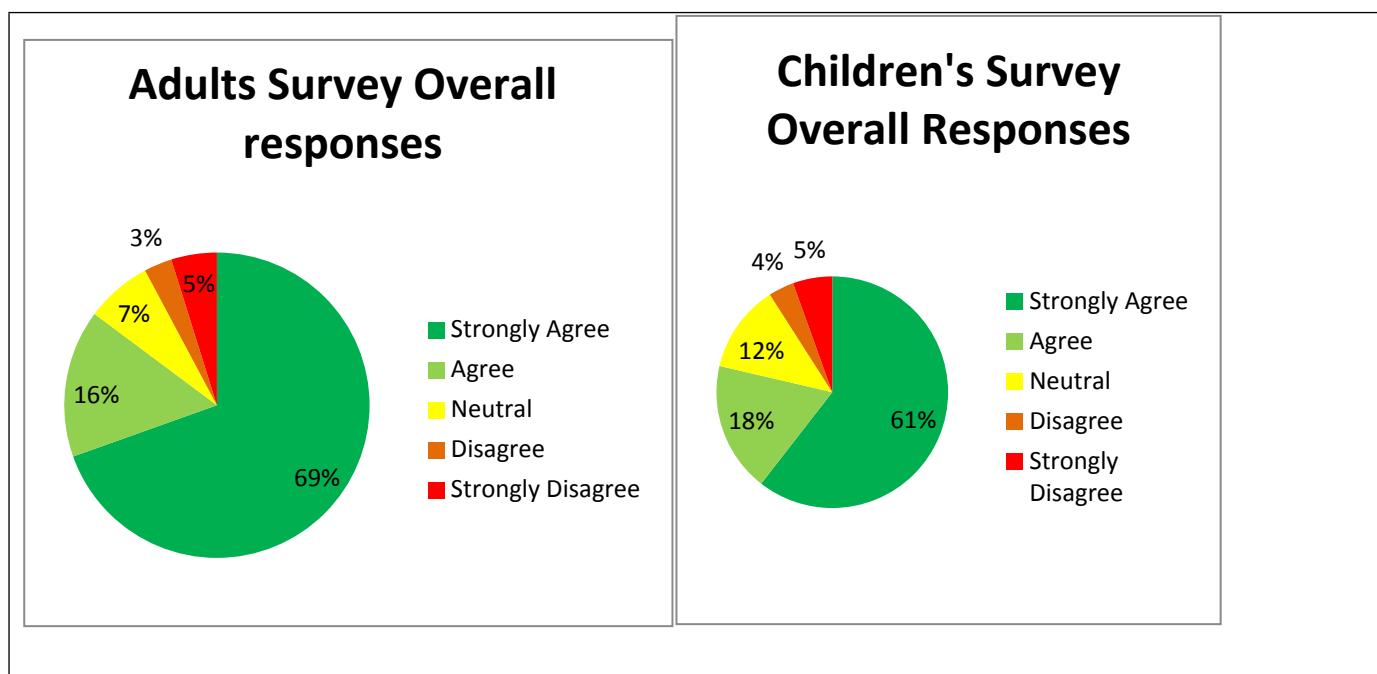
The majority of the consultation events provided an opportunity to raise concerns, dispel myths and for many parents and staff the opportunity to express their support for the strategy. However, two school consultation events and 3 other consultation events presented significant opposition to the strategy and the proposed changes for two schools.

Those in attendance at the Gosberton House Academy consultation event and the subsequent events held by LPCF at Spalding and the Boston and Sleaford LCC events, saw a core group of interested parties strongly opposed to the strategy. Parent/Carers from Gosberton House Academy, in attendance at these events and subsequently through email communication, expressed significant opposition to the proposed changes to their school and strongly objected to changing from an Autism specialist primary school to an all needs primary school.

Those in attendance at the St Francis School consultation event expressed their concerns, whilst recognising the need for change to the current school system. Their concerns related to the provision of all needs and questioned if this was a safe and appropriate environment for pupils with physical disabilities and complex medical needs. Both the Executive Head Teacher and Governors remain committed to the strategy and provided reassurance to those in attendance that the school could effectively meet all needs with the proposed capital investment programme.

Throughout the consultation period, the strategy has received overwhelming levels of support, evidenced through the survey data and feedback from some consultation events. Contributions to the survey have been generally very positive with some additional comments providing an excellent insight into the family lives of children and young people with SEND.

Analysis of the surveys is outlined below, it indicates that between 79% and 85% of respondents agree or agree strongly with the key messages in the strategy. Only 8% - 9% overall disagree or strongly disagree with the key messages within the strategy.



Overall, the survey has indicated that there is considerable support for the proposed strategy, with all key strategic messages being supported by between 61% and 96% of respondents. The only statement which was not supported by the majority was where parents were asked to identify if they would consider moving their child to a nearer school – this was met with significant opposition. However, as the proposed strategy does not require any pupil to move school against their wish, this should not be a concern if the strategy is adopted.

Recognising that the analysis presented in this report provides a more detailed picture of support and opposition for each key message and that support varies for each statement, it is clear that significantly more people are in support of the proposed strategy than are against it. Also, accepting that there has been a small amount of challenge raised regarding the survey, LCC does not accept that the

alleged bias would alter the overall outcome of the survey and is committed to ensuring the strategic vision for Lincolnshire reflects the opinions of the majority of people taking part. In addition, considerable regard has been given to the comments provided in the surveys text boxes to ensure the decision makers have given due regard to the all of the issues raised and presented.

Where the survey did present concerns and challenges, they related mostly to the proposed changes to all needs provision. Strong opposition was presented through the survey comments, by a small number of respondents, that changing an Autism specialist school to an all needs provider would significantly diminish the standard of education its pupils receive. This position has been represented throughout this report. It is also important to ensure that the position of those whose education would be significantly enhanced by the proposals should be considered and a larger number of comments have reiterated this position.

Contributions to the consultation via the SEND mailbox have been primarily from parties opposing the changes to Gosberton House Academy. As emails provide an opportunity for a direct and personal dialogue, this method of communication has been favoured by parties opposing the proposals. In addition to the communication direct to the mailbox, a number of Elected Members and Senior LA Officers have been contacted directly by these same parties opposing the changes to type of need catered for, where the school currently provides a specialism. All respondents have received direct responses from either the SEND Project Office or the recipient of the communication outlining LCC's position. In addition to the emails received opposing the strategy, 4 emails were received in support of the proposals to improve links between mainstream and specials school.

The strategy has been presented to other interested parties throughout the consultation period including health commissioners and providers, education leaders and trade union representatives who have all given their support to the proposed strategy. As identified in the report, valuable discussions have taken place with these parties but they are fully in support of the vision for SEND provision in Lincolnshire.

It is imperative that all future decisions for pupils with SEND in Lincolnshire are taken based on the needs of the majority. This strategy has been supported throughout the consultation process by a large proportion of parents, carers and interested parties who believe the proposals will create a sustainable Special School system to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEND across the county. However, it is equally as important to acknowledge the strength of opposition to the changes to Gosberton House Academy and, to a lesser extent, St Francis Special School. Decision makers from both the LA and DfE will give fair consideration to the impact of the strategy as an improvement to the whole Special School system. The capital investment program which accompanies this strategy has been welcomed by all Special School Leaders.

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