

Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Interim Director Children's Services Education

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| Report to: | Lincolnshire Schools' Forum |
| Date: | 16 January 2020 |
| Subject: | Progress Report on the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy |

Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide Schools Forum with an update on the implementation of the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy, approved by Executive Council on 6 November 2018. The report summarises the progress made within the Capital Programme and in all supporting system areas.

Recommendation(s):

Schools Forum is asked to note the contents of this report.

Background

In March 2017, the DfE announced the High Needs Strategic Review, instructed all Local Authorities (LA) to review provision for pupils with SEND in order to ensure that there are sufficient good school places which meet the changing needs of pupils with SEND. The review required LA's to work in close collaboration with special schools and parent and carer groups to co-produce a strategic plan which delivers sustainable, good quality provision to meet current and future needs.

Locally, Education Leaders recognised significant challenges within the existing provision and all agreed that the status quo could not remain. Increased demand on a limited number of school places, excessively long journeys for a significant number of pupils, the potentially detrimental impact of some Out of County placements on families and the need for significant improvements to some special school buildings have all led to sector leaders identifying the need for change.

A shared response was required to these significant challenges and collaboration of School Leaders and the Parent/Carer Forum was identified as the foundation for developing an effective solution. With a commitment to developing a sustainable, inclusive and localised special education system, Special School Leaders, Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) and the LA co-produced the Building

Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy and have formed a collaboration to oversee the strategy's implementation (Lincolnshire SEND Alliance).

In November 2018, the Executive granted approval to implement the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy. Implementation of this strategy commenced in January 2019 and will take place over the next five years with the final school changes being made in September 2024. This date differs from the original proposed completion date due to the outcome of DfE decision making around the proposed new free school, which will be outlined later in this report.

Once fully implemented, the strategy will make significant changes to the existing special education provision, creating an integrated and sustainable school system where pupils can attend their nearest special school, confident that their education and health needs can be fully met.

In order to achieve this ambition, the strategy will provide a locality-based, sector-wide approach to special education which will enable all special schools to meet the wide range of needs of pupils within their local community. As existing special schools are designed to meet specific designations of need, each school has obtained approval to change its designation to enable them to meet All Needs. In addition, the strategy will significantly increase the special school estate to address existing overcrowding issues and the growing demand, through capital investment to support expansion, in line with projected need. The allocated capital investment will be utilised to improve premises and facilities, enabling each school to offer places to pupils from within their local communities with All Needs.

All special schools have committed to making significant changes to the type of need catered for and expansion where this has been identified and these are outlined in the strategy. All 14 Special Schools will be able to meet “all needs” once fully implemented.

Progress Update

1. Capital Programme

This report provides an update on the first year of delivery of the capital programme. The majority of schemes are still in their infancy with feasibility and early stages of design being the focus for the first cohort of schools. Corporate Property is delivering this element of the strategy and LCC directorates are working closely in partnership with schools and contractors to bring each scheme to fruition.

An overview of the capital programme timeline can be viewed in Appendix A.

Boston John Fielding School

In line with projected need, the new Boston John Fielding School will provide a specialist education for 140 students, providing an increase of 84 special school places for children and young people with SEND in the Boston area. A site located adjacent to the current Boston St Nicholas Primary School has been identified as the location for the new school. Development work between LCC, the Contractor

and the Academy Trust has commenced to ensure the school design will deliver a suitable building which will ensure all needs provision can be delivered.

Feasibility and design for this scheme has been undertaken and planning permission was approved in November 2019. The Contractor will begin work on site in early 2020, with the new building due to be completed by June 2021, for September 2021 opening.

Please see Appendix B for an image of the new school building.

In preparation for planning, pre-planning engagement sessions for local residents and families of children attending both The John Fielding School and St Nicholas Primary School was held. In addition, families with children who live in Boston but attend a special school other than The John Fielding School were invited to raise awareness of the plans and future additional places. Responses from the event were included in the planning application.

Bourne Willoughby School

In line with projected need, Bourne Willoughby School will expand to a capacity of 148 on its existing site, providing an additional 68 special school places. Building plans include a new classroom block, some internal remodelling, enhanced car parking facilities and improvements to school bus drop off and pick up.

Feasibility and design for this scheme has been completed and planning permission submitted with the outcome expected in January 2020. If approved, the Contractor is forecasting to be on site from Spring 2020 and completing all works by June 2021.

In preparation for planning, a pre-planning engagement session was held for local residents, staff and families of children attending Bourne Willoughby School. In addition, families with children who live in Bourne area but attend a different specialist school were invited to raise awareness of the plans and future additional places. Responses from the event were positive and have been included in the planning application.

The Eresby School, Spilsby

In line with projected need, The Eresby School, Spilsby will benefit from remodelling and redevelopment which will enable a minimum of 84 pupils with all needs to attend this school.

Feasibility and design for this scheme has been completed, which will provide the school with a new teaching block and some internal remodelling. It will also benefit from a new entrance that will allow a one way flow of traffic to significantly enhance the drop off and pick up of pupils and increase parking numbers for staff and visitors.

Planning permission has been submitted with the outcome expected in early 2020. If approved, the contractor will be on site from Spring 2020 and completing works

by June 2021. A pre-planning engagement session was held October 2019 which generated support from students, families and local residents alike and all responses included in the planning application.

St Lawrence School, Horncastle

In line with projected need, St Lawrence School will be expanded to provide spaces for an additional 70 pupils on the existing site.

Feasibility and design for this scheme are due to be completed in early January 2020, with the school benefitting from a new teaching block and significant internal remodelling. It will also benefit from enhanced parking and drop off and pick up facilities.

It is intended that all proposed works at St Lawrence School will be completed by December 2021, enabling the school to be operational from January 2022.

St Bernard's School, Louth

In line with projected need, St Bernard's School will benefit from an expansion to enable a minimum of 100 pupils to be educated on the existing site.

A feasibility report has been produced which proposes the demolition of a defunct boarding block in the centre of the school and replaced with new teaching accommodation. The Short Breaks provision sited at St Bernard's School will be retained during the project.

It is intended that this scheme will be completed by August 2022.

Lincoln Free School/ Lincoln St Christopher's School

Lincolnshire's application for a new special free school submitted to the Department for Education in October 2018 was unsuccessful. This information was received by the LA in March 2019 and, as a result, it has been necessary to consider all alternative options available, to create increased specialist school capacity for Lincoln City. An extensive options appraisal was undertaken and this report concluded that the most suitable option to ensure Lincoln City has sufficient special school places, is to expand the current Lincoln St Christopher's School over two sites, with a new capacity of 333 overall. In order to ensure adequate space and facilities for this number of pupils, it would be necessary to develop a new primary facility on a second site (proposed to be the former Usher School site, Skellingthorpe Road) with a capacity of 130 and provide extensive remodelling and development to the existing St Christopher's School to create a secondary provision with a capacity of 203.

As this involves an LA maintained school, Lincolnshire County Council is both the proposer and the decision maker of any significant changes. In October 2019, Executive Councillor approved a recommendation to proceed to Statutory Notification and Representation Period for formal consultation, which was held in October and November 2019. The outcome of the consultation and subsequent

recommendations will be presented to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee for consideration on 17th January 2020 before proceeding to Full Council for final decision on 4th February 2020.

Subject to approval, it is intended that the primary school will be completed by September 2022. The existing school will then be remodelled to provide secondary education. It is anticipated that all the works will be completed by September 2024. These dates represent a delay of up to 12 months due to the unsuccessful free school application and the requirement to reconsider and consult on a new proposal.

All other LCC delivered schemes will come on line as the implementation of the strategy progresses, as can be seen in Appendix A.

Community Inclusive Trust (CIT) Self Delivery Projects

The following schemes (excluding The Priory) have all received Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) from the Department for Education (DfE) and self-delivery by the Trust has been approved. The Local Authority has made an additional financial contribution to the self-delivery projects to ensure all needs can be met at all CIT Academies. Condition Improvement Funding for these schemes has been allocated for specific aspects of development, including the building of a hydrotherapy pool at the Sandon site. Additional LA funding was required to address the areas of development essential to meet all needs, which CIF monies were not permitted to address.

The Trust is working with Corporate Property to ensure their expansion plans are in accordance with the SEND strategy. Project Managers from LCC provide regular monitoring and support to these schemes.

Grantham Ambergate Sports College / The Sandon School

Projected need dictates a requirement for a minimum of 229 specialist school places in the Grantham area and the approved strategy cited that The Sandon School and Ambergate Sports College would become one school operating over two sites with sufficient places to meet all needs.

During the design phase, CIT identified that the two school sites were not large enough to deliver all needs provision for 229 pupils. An additional site in Grantham (Stornoway which is owned by CIT) was identified as a potential solution to the limited site size. A comprehensive options appraisal was undertaken which identified the development of a post-16 provision for Grantham, on the newly proposed site, allowing existing post-16 spaces to be used for primary and secondary education. This will ensure the Trust can meet all needs education for its pupils. Feasibility for this third site is currently underway and the Trust and LA will be considering the outcome in early 2020.

Expansion of the Ambergate Sports College site is due for completion in Spring 2020 with the developments at the Sandon school site due to be completed later in the year.

The Garth School / The Priory School, Spalding

CIT will also be self-delivering the development of The Garth School, Spalding whilst Corporate Property will be delivering the solution for The Priory School, Spalding as this is a more complex and costly scheme.

In line with the approved strategy, these two schools will become one operating over two sites with a capacity of 177. Both schemes are due for completion by September 2022. CIT have commenced feasibility for The Garth School whilst the implementation of The Priory scheme will commence in due course.

2. Children and Young People with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)

In July 2019, a residential was held to progress the development of a clear strategy for the educational provision for children and young people with SEMH. This residential provided sector leaders with the opportunity to consider how far the approved strategy met the needs of this cohort and what, if any, additional provision is required to ensure pupils with a primary need of SEMH can fulfil their potential in Lincolnshire schools. The residential was well-attended and generated aspirational thinking and a strong sense of commitment to ensuring all SEMH needs can be met.

In response to the residential, all existing workstreams have been tasked to reconsider their original brief from the perspective of a child with SEMH and ensure their proposals can fully meet the needs of this cohort. A writing group has also been established to develop Lincolnshire's strategy for SEMH needs which will be developed in line with the already approved Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy. This group will develop a model of provision which ensures children and young people with SEMH can access education, health and care at the right time, in the right place, as close to home as possible.

These groups have been tasked to produce Lincolnshire's SEMH strategic vision and the committee will be updated of progress in due course.

3. Satellite Provision

The proposed model for satellite provision is being developed within the Design workstream. Representatives from mainstream and special education and LA Officers have collaborated to develop an aspirational model for satellite provision which will enable children and young people attending special school to have access to a wider curriculum and greater mainstream opportunities. The proposed model for satellite provision will also support greater transition from special school to mainstream school for those pupils who have the potential to achieve academic qualifications, with more tailored support.

The satellite workstream has been tasked with considering the possible utilisation of satellite provision for children and young people with SEMH needs. Once this

task is complete, a final paper will be submitted to the Project Board proposing the preferred satellite model for approval.

4. Community Led Panels

The Design workstream has been tasked with creating a mechanism for sector-led challenge to ensure that Lincolnshire children have access to the right education, health and care at the right time, in the right place as close to home as possible. At present, children and young people with SEND may be placed on Home Tuition or be educated in Out of County provision, as there are not enough school places or local special schools state that they cannot meet need. In order to ensure that this does not continue, it was agreed that each locality needed to ensure that all schools acknowledge ownership and responsibility for this group of children and should work together to ensure school places were available to all students as close to home as possible.

A model of delivery has been approved, namely the development of Specialist Community Led Panels for each locality to meet the needs of children and young people requiring a special school place at the right time as close to home as possible.

The panels will seek to identify a local special school place for the following cohort, through solution-focused discussion and peer challenge:

- A child/young person residing in Lincolnshire with an EHCP who is at the local special school setting but school states they are struggling to meet need.
- A child/young person has a recently finalised EHCP recommending specialist provision and, following consultation, the local special school feel unable to meet need.
- A child/young person has an EHCP and moves in from another area and local special school queries being able to meet need.
- A child/young person is identified as requiring an Out of County placement as local special school queries being able to meet need.
- A child/young person is at risk of permanent exclusion from a local special school.

This model is currently being reviewed to ensure that children and young people with SEMH needs are incorporated into Specialist Community Led Panels. A pilot of this panel is to be launched in the coming months.

5. Health

The Health workstream has sought to develop robust partnership working across the Local Authority, Health Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups to ensure an effective health offer can be provided to all special schools. This workstream has made significant progress in developing the health offer including the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between schools and health providers, setting out clear expectations around provision.

6. Specialist Equipment Contract

In order to ensure the most effective use of specialist medical and therapy equipment, all special schools have, in principle agreed to join the existing contractual arrangements held by the Local Authority with specialist equipment providers. This is currently under review, with financial implications for both special schools and the LA are being considered. The model being considered would require all special schools to agree a baseline contribution to the existing contract; this contribution is currently being analysed based on existing spending patterns and will be discussed further at the Special Schools Project Board.

7. Workforce Development

The Workforce Development workstream was established to develop a coordinated, sector-led approach to professional development to ensure all pupils with SEND can access a quality education in the right place, as close to home as possible. The group has been tasked with developing a learning model which can provide all school staff with access to a training framework for SEND, mapping existing SEND training provision to ensure they are aligned to the proposed framework and consider how recruitment and retention can be improved to support the increase in special school places.

A proposed model has been developed in collaboration with Learn and Inspire Teaching Schools, special and mainstream school leaders and key stakeholders. This model was considered by the July 2019 Project Board and further recommendations have been made. One key recommendation is to ensure all training needs around SEMH issues are included. The board also tasked the workstream to consider further evidence-based practice and quality assurance along with ensuring families have access to the training platform. The model is being reviewed to incorporate all recommendations and will be resubmitted to Project Board in due course.

Financial Context

Implementing the capital programme of works to ensure all special schools have the facilities and premises to meet all needs, with appropriate inflationary increases in line with a 5 year delivery plan, is projected to cost circa £50m. As surveys and requirements to the schemes progress, the financial needs are being regularly reviewed. Where variations to projected costs are identified, options are being considered, including how any potential increases can be financed. In a project of this magnitude there is ample opportunity to address building schedules to minimise any potential overspend and to seek additional funding opportunities.

Funding Allocations

| Amount | Source |
|--------|-------------------|
| £25.1m | Maintenance Grant |
| £3.2m | Basic Need Grant |
| £0.84m | Internal Capital |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| £2.852m | DfE SEND Capital |
| £2.525m | Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) |
| £16.12m * | Future Basic Need Grant (* indicative) |
| £50.637m | |

Source: Executive report dated October 2018

*The future basic need allocation is indicative at this stage, as allocations are only provided for the next 3 years. The amount determined is based on the LA capital return for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and final funding allocations will be subject to confirmation from central government.

The Council is firmly committed to implementing this strategy to improve the lives of pupils with SEND and their families whilst recognising there is a financial risk due to future basic need being indicative. All financial risks are understood, and the funding requirements have been identified through the LA capital return submission and are substantiated through the strategy to increase the special school estate by over 500 places.

The Academy Trusts within the strategy have committed to ensuring all future CIF bids are consistent with the vision outlined in the strategy and £2.525m has already been allocated through CIF funding. There are a number CIF bids submitted in this financial year's application process in line with the wider strategy.

Government treasury are expected to release further SEND capital opportunities over the coming year either through direct allocations or bidding rounds, which Lincolnshire will be wishing to explore.

As highlighted previously in this report, the LA's application for a free school was unsuccessful. Approval to capitalise £5m from the Dedicated Schools Grant revenue underspend has been granted through Schools Forum and a request has been submitted to the Secretary of State for this to occur. If approved, this allocation will be utilised to support the development of the new primary site for St Christopher's, facilitating sufficient special school places for the Lincoln area, with additional funding identified through Basic Need allocations once confirmed.

Revenue funding of £2m has been allocated to support the implementation of the SEND vision through the Dedicated Schools Grant reserve. These one-off brought forward monies will be utilised to develop the revenue elements of the strategy including implementation of the workforce development framework, and supporting schools with planned growth in places. Monies from this allocation will fund fixtures and fittings for 57 new classrooms costing approx. £527,000 with fixtures and fittings for all **new** non-teaching spaces still to be agreed. This allocation will also support the implementation of Specialist Community Led Panels (SCLP) and Satellite provision based on approved models from the Design workstream. At present, only the model for the SCLP's has been approved and, once piloted, confirmed financial requirements will be explicit.

Indicative costings for the workforce development model required for special schools have been established and once the model has been approved by Project Board, projected costs will be shared with Schools Forum.

It is recognised that, as with all school expansions, a planned reorganisation will need to take place through incremental increases in place numbers (tailored to each individual school) to ensure integration of pupils is sustained. This will be subject to a policy that is currently being developed by the LA. Government funding is lagged in funding special school places, therefore the LA will be required to support a funding gap, which the funding resource identified will facilitate. The Schools Forum will be updated on the spending attached to this allocation as the programme progresses.

Conclusion

In the initial implementation period, significant progress has been made across the capital investment programme with eight out of fourteen schools actively engaged in feasibility and design of their planned development. In accordance with the outlined programme, six schools will be all needs operational by Autumn term 2021 with at least two more schools coming on line in 2022. Whilst there has been a delay identified to the final delivery on St Christopher's School due to the unsuccessful special free school bid, the whole strategic vision will still be implemented in five years from approval as set out in the original strategy.

In order for all schools to be all needs operational, the identified support systems of workforce development, health offer and SEND design must be established in advance of the first all needs school opening. It is therefore essential that the proposed models developed by the workstreams come to fruition over the next academic year to ensure that are well-established and embedded into the system. The supporting systems have been developed collaboratively with sector experts from the Local Authority, mainstream and special schools and LPCF to ensure that they fully meet the needs of all Lincolnshire children with SEND and their families.

Consultation

The outcome of the consultation for the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy was considered by Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee in October 2018.

Further consultation regarding the proposed amendments to the strategy involving Lincoln St Christopher's School will be presented to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee in January 2020, following formal consultation on the aforementioned proposal.

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

Risk and Impact Assessments for capital schemes are held with Corporate Property.

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report

Appendix A Capital Programme Summary

Appendix B Design - Boston John Fielding School

Background Papers

| Document title | Where the document can be viewed |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy | SEND Project Office |

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