

## **BOROUGH OF TELFORD AND WREKIN**

### **PROPOSAL TO PERMANENTLY INCREASE CAPACITY AT HAUGHTON SPECIAL SCHOOL AND DELIVER SPECIALIST HUBS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS**

#### **1. MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1. Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there is a school place available for every child. The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities under review (including its sufficiency), working with parents, young people and providers.
- 1.2. During the academic year 2017/18, a review was undertaken in Telford and Wrekin of its High Need provision for school aged children with special educational needs and disabilities. This report sets out the key findings of the review and presents a way forward to meet the increasing demand for specialist provision.
- 1.3. The main findings of the review concluded that:
  - The number of children with SEND in the local area is high when compared with regional and national averages. In part, this is likely to be as a result of the reputation of Telford and Wrekin for its effective practice, whereby the needs of children and young people with SEND are quickly identified and met. There does appear to be some over reliance on the Education Health Care (EHC) assessment process to meet need, with the prevalence of children and young people with an EHC Plan being above national norms.
  - The overall proportion of children with an EHC Plan who attend a special school in Telford and Wrekin is higher than national and regional norms. A contributing factor is likely to be as a result of the underdevelopment of resource base (specialist hub) provision in mainstream schools within Telford and Wrekin.
  - The needs of children are changing with significant growth expected relating to Autistic Spectrum Condition and Social, Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs. There is a particular increase in numbers of children in Key Stage 2 with complex SEMH.
  - Pupil numbers have grown within special schools and there is a need to consider capital builds that caters for this increase.
  - Whilst the number of children in independent special school provision, located outside of Telford and Wrekin, is currently lower

than regional and national norms, there may be opportunities to adapt and develop local special schools to offer highly therapeutic provision that caters for the most complex areas of need.

- The extension in statutory SEND duties up to the age of 25, and subsequent increase in growth of EHC plans at post 16, has caused a significant additional burden in terms of funding. High need funding allocations, from the DfE, have not kept pace with growing numbers and consequently, there has been limited resource to develop further provision.
- 1.4. The Local Authority has been focusing on building the resilience and capacity of mainstream schools to meet increasing complexity of need and schools are responding to this. However, it is recognised that the Borough does not have any specialist hub provision in mainstream schools (other than two part time language units), which would enable children with special needs, such as complex Autism, to be educated on a mainstream site.
  - 1.5. The Local Authority consulted stakeholders in June/July 2018 on possible options to meet the growing demand for specialist provision and there was widespread support for a broader continuum of provision which could be provided through specialist hubs. Following a best practice visit to Warwickshire in January 2019, the focus group agreed to the development of a partnership arrangement between special schools and a small number of mainstream schools whereby the mainstream school would 'host' the specialist hub.
  - 1.6. In 2017, the DfE announced special provision capital funding for local authorities to invest in new places and/or improvements to facilities for pupils with high needs including those with education, health and care (EHC) plans. The funding is primarily intended to create new places and improve facilities at existing schools. Telford and Wrekin's current allocation amounts to £848,837 (2018-2021) over three years. Some of this funding can be utilised to support the establishment of the units in a small number of mainstream schools and to support the improvement or create new places for specialist provision.
  - 1.7. The recommendation to develop specialist hubs in mainstream schools in partnership with special schools was approved by Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

## **2. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Putting Children and Young People First
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Provision of school places for children and young people with SEND.
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	The plan runs from 2018 – 2021.	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes/ No	The estimated costs of developing specialist hub provision as outlined in the detail of the report will not exceed the special provision capital funding grant of £848,837. As noted in the main body of the report, specialist hubs are part of an overarching strategy to control the increase in the cost of high needs provision in T&W, by ensuring that appropriate provision is in place for each level of need. By doing so, it is intended to minimise circumstances in which children and young people are in more specialist provision (e.g. special schools) than is necessary for their needs. The development of specialist hubs is one of a number of strategies underway to ensure that appropriate and high quality provision for children and young people with high needs in T&W is provided in the most cost effective way possible.
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes/ No	<p>It is the responsibility of Local Authorities, governing bodies and decision makers to ensure that they act in accordance with relevant legislation and statutory guidance.</p> <p>Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 requires a local authority to secure that sufficient schools [in number, character and equipment] for providing primary and secondary education, are available for its area</p> <p>Section 14(3A) requires a local authority to exercise its functions with a view to securing diversity in the provision of schools, and increasing opportunities for parental choice.</p>

	<p>The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with special educational needs [SEN] or disabilities under review (including its sufficiency) by working with parents, young people, and providers.</p> <p>This Local Offer is developed, published and reviewed under a framework provided by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years statutory guidance published in January 2015.</p> <p>The High Needs Review funding system supports local authorities in meeting these statutory responsibilities.</p> <p>The Education and Inspections Act 2006 sets out the statutory requirements for the establishment of new schools [Sections 6A to 14]; on the discontinuance of schools [Sections 15 to 17] and on alterations to schools [Sections 18 to 24]</p> <p>The DfE has issued statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers “Making Significant Changes (‘prescribed alterations’) to Maintained Schools” [last updated October 2018]. The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that good quality school places can be provided quickly where they are needed; that local authorities and governing bodies do not take decisions that will have a negative impact on other schools in the area; and that changes can be implemented quickly and effectively where there is a strong case for doing so. In line with these aims it is expected that, where possible, additional new places will only be provided at schools that have an overall Ofsted rating of ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’. Schools which do not fall within the above</p>
--	--

	<p>categories should only be expanded where there are no other viable options.</p> <p>The statutory guidance was issued under The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 [in force from 28 January 2014] and covers the processes involved in making significant changes to maintained schools, establishing new provision and school closure, including changes to special educational need [SEN] provision.</p> <p>There are four stages to the statutory process in respect of significant changes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Publication;</li> <li>2) Representation (Formal Consultation of at least 4 weeks);</li> <li>3) Decision;</li> <li>4) Implementation.</li> </ol> <p>The guidance advises that there is a strong expectation on schools and Local Authorities to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to Publication as part of their duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations.</p> <p>The statutory guidance “Opening and Closing of Maintained Schools” [last updated in November 2018] also needs to be followed where relevant to do so.</p> <p>The acquisition or disposal of any sites would be subject to the Council’s Legal Services Property Team carrying out a report on title and searches and progress would also be dependent upon any required planning approvals and other necessary consents being obtained.</p>
--	---

<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist provision planning is a best estimate based on information available at a point in time.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	Borough-wide impact: the report considers the strategy for continuing to provide a sufficiency of places for children with high special educational needs across the Borough.

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- 2.1. It is the Council's role to plan, commission and organise school places for children and young people with SEND in a way that promotes the raising of standards, manages supply and demand and creates a diverse infrastructure.
- 2.2. Under the Children and Family Act 2014, there is a presumption in law for children to be educated in mainstream schools with the option of special education where this is a parental preference and deemed appropriate. The Council is committed to providing a good quality school place for every child with SEND within their own community as far as possible.
- 2.3. In March 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) committed £23m across local authorities to support their capacity to review and develop their Local Offer of special provision. Telford and Wrekin was allocated £77,002 and in 17/18 undertook a strategic review in consultation with key stakeholders including local parents and young people.
- 2.4. At this time, the DfE also announced special provision capital funding for local authorities to invest in new places and/or improvements to facilities for pupils with high needs including those with education, health and care (EHC) plans. The funding is primarily intended to create new places and improve facilities at existing schools. This is in recognition of the known national increase in demand, particularly surrounding requests for specialist school provision, which has also been seen locally over recent years. Telford and Wrekin's current allocation amounts to £848,837 (2018-2021) over three years. The local authority is required to develop and update, each year, a plan that shows how the funding will be invested in order for funding to be released.

### **3. Current context**

- 3.1. The demand on special school places in Telford and Wrekin is high. At the start of September 2018, 4 out of 5 special schools were full in that all commissioned places had been used; the demand for reception places at the Bridge School has doubled over the last two academic years and Haughton School required additional physical capacity in September 2017 (an annex on a mainstream school site) to meet increasing demand. The local authority recognises that it has more children with EHC plans placed in maintained special schools than the national average (35% compared to 26% *Source: LG Inform 2017/18*) and has sent out strategic messages through the SEND Strategy, that focus on building the resilience of mainstream schools to meet increasing complexity of need. There is acknowledgement and will from the school community that culture change is required which moves away from special school provision to promote and reinforce further opportunities for inclusion in mainstream. However, there is an immediate need to plan for and deliver sufficiency in terms of specialist provision.
- 3.2. This does not necessarily mean however, that long term expansion of our special schools is appropriate. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that simply increasing special school placements alone will only increase demand further. Rather, alternative options to increase specialist provision will need to be explored. As an example, the availability of specialist resource base provision in mainstream schools is an area currently under-developed throughout Telford and Wrekin.
- 3.3. Alongside the need to develop specialist provision, the local authority has focused heavily on early intervention approaches and work to develop provision at SEN support level in schools. A range of opportunities that build schools capacity to meet the needs of children with SEND are on offer.
- 3.4. In addition to school aged delivery, further work is planned as Phase 2 of the Strategy to consider the development of provision for children aged 0-5 and young people aged 16-25 with SEND. Supplementary work is required to understand the priority needs of these cohorts and attune existing provision in light of presenting demand. With regard to the 19-25 cohort, this will include close cooperation with adult care services to identify appropriate pathways of support into adulthood.

#### **4. Key messages from the High Need Review**

4.1. During 2017, a needs analysis was undertaken in collaboration with a property management company that specialises in specialist pupil place planning across the education sector. A comparison activity was completed regarding our position against national and regional norms followed by a detailed pupil planning activity using current and historical data to plot trends and forecast special school sufficiency. Finally, a school asset overview was undertaken of special school settings in order to identify optimum capacity / opportunities for reconfiguration.

4.2. Issues highlighted through the needs analysis include:

- There is effective identification of children with SEND in the local area but indication of over reliance on the EHC assessment process to meet need.
- The cohort of children with SEND continues to grow.
- The amount of children in special schools is greater than national and regional norms.
- There is a narrow continuum of provision as a result of the underdevelopment of resource provision in mainstream schools.
- The needs of children are changing with significant growth expected relating to Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and Social, Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
- Pupil numbers have grown within special schools and there is a need to consider capital builds that caters for this increase.
- Whilst the number of children in independent specialist provision is currently lower than regional and national norms, there is a need to consider the growing numbers of children with highly complex ASC and SEMH and how local provision can be adapted to meet this area of need.

4.3. Work has already begun to address some of these issues

- Since September 2016, a clearer pathway to EHC assessments has been developed with a focus on the 'graduated approach' to supporting children's SEND. Decision making via an EHC panel has promoted consistency and there are more flexible avenues to access funding for children with complex SEND through a school led Inclusive School Forum reducing the reliance on EHCPs to access funding.
- Requests for special school placements have begun to stabilise via more consistent decision-making based on existing thresholds, albeit pressure continues to exist on settings that are already full.

- Work has begun on the development of an early years and school based strategy to meet the needs of children with Autism including partnership with the Autism Education Trust.
  - The need to create additional capacity for Haughton Special School has already been agreed.
- 4.4. However, in recognition of the predicted growth in the SEND cohort, further proposals were consulted upon to address Telford and Wrekin's forecast gaps and challenges.

## 5. Consultation and engagement process

In June/July 2018, the local authority consulted with a range of stakeholders including parents, carers, young people and children, school leaders, health and care colleagues regarding the proposal to develop specialist hubs which received broad support.

## 6. Proposal for Development

- 6.1. Proposals for the development of specialist provision were underpinned by the principles set out in Telford and Wrekin's strategy for SEND 'Belief is Everything' including:

- To develop a broader continuum of provision within the local area that minimises any further increases to special school placements and use of out of county provision.
- To increase partnership between mainstream and special schools including a refreshed special school outreach offer.
- To maximise the opportunity for inclusion.
- To educate children as close to home as possible.
- To provide greater choice for parents.

- 6.2. **Current Proposal - To develop specialist resource provision, in mainstream schools, for children with cognition and learning difficulties and social interaction issues including Autistic Spectrum Conditions.**

This proposal seeks to develop specialist resource base provision in mainstream schools for primary aged learners with cognition and learning difficulties and social communication issues including Autistic Spectrum Conditions. It will be delivered via a partnership model where the base is operated as a satellite of a special school (Haughton School) but is located on a mainstream 'host' school site (Old Park and Hollinswood Primary Schools) where the pupils are on-roll at the special school and the base is managed and staffed by the special school.

6.3. Telford and Wrekin Council propose that Haughton school's capacity would increase from 109 to 156 in September 2019 to provide for an additional 27 places on site and 20 places in specialist hubs. The expansion of numbers is necessary to reflect growing numbers of children on site at Haughton School over recent years and temporary accommodation will be provided (until a permanent solution is finalised). The development of two satellite specialist hubs, each catering for 10 places, will be located in Old Park and Hollinswood Nursery and Primary Schools. It is anticipated that the temporary accommodation on site at Haughton and remodelling within the mainstream school sites, will take place during July and August 2019 with completion by September 2019.

6.4. These proposals were prioritised over other considerations for the following reasons:

- The developments are relatively cost effective making use of existing space in Telford Schools or linking with proposed building programmes to expand school based provision.
- Achieving 'spread' of provision would address access and inclusion issues – both in relation to geographical reach but also in relation to enabling complex learners with SEND to access education closer to home in their own communities.
- The proposals maximise and draw upon the respective strengths of mainstream and specialist providers.
- The proposals will build capacity and skills with a significant impact on a wider range of learners beyond those attending the new provision. For example, by locating resource bases in mainstream schools, as suggested in proposal 1, there would be skills transfer between the specialist staff and those working in mainstream, benefiting a wide range of vulnerable learners.

## **7. Description of Specialist Hubs**

7.1. There is recognition that a number of children can find mainstream classrooms difficult due to their learning needs, sensory overload, social difficulties and high levels of anxiety but who are able to access a mainstream curriculum. In order to achieve positive outcomes and prepare effectively for adulthood, these learners would benefit from smaller group sizes, the right environment and staff who are able to provide identified specialist support. When appropriately supported, these learners can significantly benefit from being integrated on a mainstream school site, which provides access to specialist teaching facilities, a broad curriculum and subject-specialist teaching staff as well

as maximising opportunities for children and young people to interact with mainstream peers for some aspects of their learning and/or social interaction.

- 7.2. Based on practice in other areas, there are established and effective models of specialist hub provision located on mainstream primary and secondary school sites for between 6-12 learners with dedicated staffing and resources. Telford and Wrekin will seek schools and academies to accommodate such provision. A number of provisions could be established over time to ensure coverage across the borough. It is anticipated that the primary provision will largely feed into secondary-aged provision as required.

## **8. SEN Support and Education, Health and Care Plans**

- 8.1. SEN Support describes the approach adopted by settings to meet the needs of children with SEND. The majority of children with SEND, both nationally and locally, will have their needs met through SEN Support. SEN Support is only delivered in mainstream educational settings.
- 8.2. Where threshold for an Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment is met, the local authority will follow due process to determine the appropriateness of issuing an EHC plan for a child with SEND. There is a presumption in law, with reference to the Education Act, 1996 and Children and Family Act 2014, for children to be educated in mainstream education. However, where requested by parents and dependent on the complexity of a child's needs, a child may attend a special school. Children must have an EHC plan to access a special school placement.

## **9. Glossary of terms**

ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
HI	Hearing Impairment
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
PD	Physical Difficulties
PMLD	Profound Multiple Learning Difficulty
SEMH	Social, Emotional Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SLCN	Speech Language and Communication Needs

SLD	Severe Learning Difficulty
SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulty
VI	Visual Impairment

### **How to make a comment about this proposal**

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, any person may object to, or make comments by sending them to: School Organisation Services, Telford and Wrekin Council, Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF3 4JA or by email to [schoolorganisation@telford.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@telford.gov.uk)

The closing date for comments is: **29 July 2019**

Following closure of the consultation the Local Authority will consider all representations made and a report will be submitted to cabinet within 2 months to ratify the decision about the proposals.

**Publication Date: 02 July 2019**