

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES AND
RESIDENT EXPERIENCE****DATE: 11 APRIL 2017**

**LEAD OFFICER: JOHN STEBBINGS, CHIEF PROPERTY OFFICER
LIZ MILLS, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, SCHOOLS AND LEARNING**

**SUBJECT: ASHFORD PARK SCHOOL, ASHFORD
LOSELEY FIELDS SCHOOL, GODALMING
OAKFIELD SCHOOL, FETCHAM
PROPOSAL FOR SPECIALIST LEARNING AND ADDITIONAL
NEEDS CENTRES REFRESH**

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Over 12 years ago Surrey County Council opened eight specialist centres across the county for junior aged pupils with Learning Difficulties (LD). The pupils now attending the Learning and Additional Needs (LAN) Centres have greater levels of need than when they first opened. As a result the centres were not originally set up to admit such a cohort and they require additional capital works in order to meet the needs of pupils now accessing the provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:

1. Approves the Business Case for improving the facilities at Ashford Park, Loseley Fields and Oakfield schools in order that the centres are better able to meet the needs of pupils with a greater level of need.
2. Approves the arrangements by which a variation of up to 10% of the total value may be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director for Children, School and Families in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement, the Cabinet Member for Business Services and Residential Experience and the Leader of the Council.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

This proposal will provide enhanced specialist provision attached to mainstream schools for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs/Education Health Care Plans to meet a wider range of pupil needs. It will be a more efficient and effective use of existing specialist resources.

DETAILS:

Business Case

1. In September 2004 the Council opened eight specialist centres at mainstream schools for junior aged pupils with Learning Difficulties (LD). These developments were intended to establish a specialism at mainstream schools. These have been successful in meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties within a mainstream setting.
2. In 2012 a review of Learning Difficulties was undertaken and identified that the centres would be required to make arrangements for pupils with a wider range of needs covered by the description Learning and Additional needs (LAN). The LAN description covers pupils with mobility difficulties, hearing difficulties, autism, communication and interaction needs and some behavioural difficulties.
3. Pupils now attending the centres are demonstrating a much higher level of need than when they first opened. The centres were not originally set up to admit a cohort of pupils with additional needs and pupils were expected to benefit from a significant amount of time in mainstream. Due to the level of Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND), pupils now spend more time receiving specialist input in the centre and in some cases have very little mainstream time.
4. A programme of visits across the county to the eight schools that host the LAN centres was taken during 2015. Three of the centres were identified as requiring an upgrade to meet the needs of pupils with more complex needs. These centres are based at Ashford Park in Ashford, Loseley Fields in Godalming and Oakfield School in Fetcham. Each of these schools was rated as Good by Ofsted during their most recent inspections.
5. As the centres are educating pupils with a different level of need it is important to ensure that the necessary amount of space and specialist facilities is provided. This means that pupils can be more independent learners and can also develop important living skills, preparing them for adulthood. The centres require investment to make them accessible to pupils with mobility difficulties, to create additional classroom space and to provide disabled access toilets and changing space for young people to have dignity and learn to be independent with essential living skills. Other spaces will have access to outside learning or break out areas directly from the classroom.
6. The county has recently issued the SEND Development Plan 2016-2020 to develop the offer to families of pupils with SEND. The plan specifies that, 'We will have the right provision to meet children and young people's needs' and 'Children and young people can access high quality, community based local provision that enables them to achieve the right outcomes based on their personal needs'. The approaches outlined in the points above are therefore in keeping with the SEND 2020 strategy.
7. Discussions with County Council officers, the head teachers and heads of centres have taken place as to the future of the specialist centre provision at the schools. Working in partnership with the Local Authority, the schools are

fully in agreement with the proposals to develop the specialist centre provision.

8. There will be no change to pupil admissions. Pupils will continue to access the school according to the processes that are currently in place for children with an Education Health Care plan.

CONSULTATION:

9. The development of the specialist centres are not new additions to the school and therefore no formal consultation has been required.
10. Internally, the Assistant Director for Schools and Learning, Head of Additional and Special needs and SEN area teams have been consulted and support the approach to develop the specialist centres.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

11. There is significant pressure on expenditure for Special Educational Needs and Disability provision and a duty for the Authority to ensure that this funding is used to maximum effect. If the specialist centres are not developed then there is a risk that SEND resources would not be used as effectively as possible.
12. Alterations are required due to the change in profile of the pupils now admitted to this type of provision and making buildings fully Equality Act compliant. The Act covers having arrangements in place that put a person with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage. All other pupils attending these schools are able to access buildings and classrooms. Pupils with a disability, which is a protected characteristic, are unable to access learning opportunities in the same way as other pupils.
13. The risk with not making appropriate provision for this cohort of pupils is that parents dissatisfied with the current offer at the LAN centres will look to the maintained or Non-Maintained and Independent (NMI) special sector for education for their child resulting in much higher costs.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

14. The Capital Expenditure will be met from the SEN capital funding in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The business case for this scheme was considered by the Council's Investment Panel on 16 August 2016, the Panel supported the rationale for the project.
15. NMI costs for this type of provision are expensive. The offer of local appropriate and fully accessible maintained provision means that parents of children with LAN are supported within the maintained specialist education environment. As a result, parents work with the school and the Local Authority and do not seek placements at expensive NMI schools as an alternative option. This approach is in keeping with the SEND 2020 strategy and is the best outcome for the school and families of SEND pupils.
16. The project will be subject to robust cost challenge and scrutiny to drive optimum value as it progresses. Further financial details are set out in the

report circulated as item 6 in Part 2 of the agenda. These details have been circulated separately to ensure commercial sensitivity in the interests of securing best value.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

17. The business case for these schemes was considered at Investment Panel on 16 August 2016. The cost of the schemes will be met from the Special Education Needs (SEN) Strategy capital allocation in the 2017-20 Medium Term Financial Plan.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

18. Section 13 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on a Local Authority (with responsibility for education) to ensure sufficient primary and secondary education provision is available to meet the needs of the population in its area.

Equalities and Diversity

19. No negative impacts have been identified as part of this proposal. The specialist centres will be able to offer enhanced provision to pupils with protected characteristics.
20. The updated facilities will comply with the regulations specified in the Equality Act.
21. The centres will be for children in the community served by the school. The Admissions arrangements will give the highest priority to Looked After Children and pupils on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register and/or those who would benefit from a statement of educational need, thus supporting provision for our most vulnerable children.
22. The works to the centres will not create any issues requiring the production of an Equalities Impact Assessment.
23. The new school building will comply with Disabilities Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations. The expanded school will provide employment opportunities in the area.

Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

24. Safeguarding vulnerable children is a high priority in all Surrey schools. Schools have considerable expertise in safeguarding vulnerable children and adhere to robust procedures. The schools will continue to apply good practise in the area of safeguarding as they are currently. In addition, safeguarding is a key area for monitoring when Ofsted carries out inspections.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

25. If approved, to proceed to complete tenders and subsequent contract award through delegated decision.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Linda Kemeny Cabinet Member Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement
Tony Samuels, Cabinet Associate for the Built Environment
Ms Denise Turner-Stewart, Local Member for Staines South and Ashford West -
Spelthorne
Mr Steve Cosser, Local Member for Godalming North – Waverley
Mrs Clare Curran, Local Member for Bookham and Fetcham West – Mole Valley
Julie Fisher, Deputy Chief Executive and Strategic Director for Children, Schools and
Families
Local Education Officers for the south west, north east and south east areas
Head of Additional and Special Educational Needs
Paula Chowdhury, Strategic Finance Manager – Business Services
Head teachers at Oakfield, Loseley Fields and Ashford Park Schools

Sources/background papers:

Learning Difficulties Review 2012
SEND Development Plan 2016-2020
Report to Investment Panel 16 August 2016

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