

		AGENDA ITEM 8
		CYP/16/12
Committee:	Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	14 June 2012	
Special Educational Needs and Additional Educational Needs		
Enquiries to:	Graham Redgwell, Governance Officer 01245 430360 or ext. 20360 grahamr@essex.gov.uk	

**Special Educational Needs and Additional Educational Needs
Scrutiny Report**
Produced by: Donna Mair
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Project Title	Special Educational Needs and Additional Educational Needs		
Project Type	Transformation	Project Ref	TSU04/11
CLT Sponsor	Dave Hill	Cabinet Member	Cllr Castle
Business Owner	Tim Coulson	Budget Holder	Tim Coulson
Project Manager	Catherine Ball	Project Accountant	Andrew Page

Purpose

This report was requested by Schools, Children & Families Scrutiny Committee to provide an update on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Additional Educational Needs (AEN) structural changes and strategy development.

Background

The Schools and Education Service vision is to raise the aspirations and improve the life chances of every child and young person, protecting vulnerable groups and promoting the employability and skills agenda.

Specific drivers for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and AEN include the need to:

- link services more closely to those focussed on School Improvement, reflecting that improving outcomes for children with SEND is a key part of school improvement and that behaviour and learning are inextricably linked;
- complete the move that many services have already begun towards a commissioned or traded approach to delivery, which reflects the findings of the definition phase of this project;
- bring together the management of services that are fully pre-commissioned by the LA or schools, and separate delivery from commissioners;
- ensure that ECC retains capacity to meet its statutory duties in relation to SEND&AEN;
- deliver capacity that focuses on the long term and significant strategic challenges in delivering improved outcomes for children with SEND and AEN, working through a partnership with Essex mainstream and special schools; and
- deliver capacity to manage the authority's transition from a directly provided model of pupil referral unit based alternative education provision to one in which alternative provision moves to work in the academy or trust model.

In August 2011 an Outline Business Case (OBC) was presented to Outcomes Board who approved the development of a Final Business Case (FBC). The review was completed and the options considered by an external challenger with significant experience in delivery, and national level expertise in strategically reviewing SEN and AEN services. Delivery models considered were:

- retaining services with no change;
- operating a commissioned and traded delivery model,
- externalising services to a strategic partner; or
- devolving services to schools.

It was clear throughout the analysis that that the likely changes could not be considered “transformational” and there were no associated financial benefits. The Directorate Leadership Team therefore took the decision to deliver the changes as part of “Business As Usual” process.

Current Proposals:

To restructure the management of services for children with SEN and AEN and where required reorganise a number of services to support the model recognising that schools are the critical partners in the delivery and strategic direction of all services, and the responsibility for commissioning and directing services will increasingly move towards schools.

The proposed changes are as follows:

- delete the existing posts of Head of SEN Commissioning and Head of Behaviour and Attendance;
- delete the post of Children's Support Service Team Manager, in recognition of the changes to the management of the PRUs and of the Primary Behaviour Service;
- create a new post, Head of Commissioned Services, which manages the Educational Psychology Service, Education Welfare Service, Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (all of which are core commissioned by ECC for statutory work and trade other work with schools). This post also manages the Specialist Teaching Service which includes SEN INSET, Pre School SEND Services and will now include the Primary Behaviour Service. This new combined service is predominantly pre-commissioned by the DSG. The Parent Partnership Service will also be managed in Commissioned Services, whilst being prepared for externalisation;
- create a new post, Head of SEND/AEN Strategy (fixed term for 18 months), which will drive forward the tasks outlined above to bring about a new strategic approach. After the initial focus, relationships and strategy have been developed the BAU activities of this post will be determined and the post re scoped to support the required change of emphasis;
- create a new post Alternative Education Provision (AEP) Commissioner which will carry out the statutory processes around exclusions, commission AEP provision and support the development of AEP provision. It will also manage the Children's Support Service central team, which will be reviewed in line with the movement of the PRUs towards increased autonomy and reshaped to meet the demands of this process;
- provide a reporting line for quadrant head teachers of PRUs to the Lead Strategic Commissioner for Standards and Excellence which begins the process of preparing head teachers of PRUs for their increased autonomy;
- provide a reporting line for Head teachers of specialist units (Youth Offending and Adolescent Psychiatric Units) to the Head of Commissioned Services. These services are run in partnership with Health and Youth Justice; and
- bring the Statutory Assessment Team, SEN Provision Development Team and the Children's Support Service Central Team into the Planning and Provision part of the SES.

The purpose of the structural change is to:

- support a commissioned and traded model of service delivery with a commissioned services group as opposed to traditional direct provision;

- achieve alignment with the wider Schools and Education Strategy, separating provider services from commissioners and integrating SEND provision planning, access and development with that of mainstream schools; and
- deliver capacity to address strategic challenges - in the authority's approach to special educational needs and disabilities, working in a mature partnership with schools and to develop Essex's approach to Alternative Education Provision in line with the national agenda

The services in scope for this work include:

Educational Psychology Service	Children's Support Service, which includes:
Specialist Teacher Team	Central CSS Team
SEN INSET Training service	Pupil Referral Units
Pre School SEN Service	Primary Behaviour Service
Parent Partnership Service	Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service	Education Welfare Service

The proposal provides the capacity needed to develop the strategy. The benefits include:

1. Services have a clear focus on improving outcomes and are able to provide the services required by the commissioners.
2. ECC meets its statutory duties in relation to pupils with AEN and SEND.
3. Bringing the specialist teaching teams together allows a single point of referral for schools. There is also a benefit to staff that are enabled to develop their professional expertise as a result of sharing knowledge and skills within the new extended team.
4. Creates capacity to address some of the issues relating to statutory functions and coordinates all areas of work which relate to SEND/AEN.
5. Strategically develops AEP in line with the national agenda as set out in the Education White Paper and in the Taylor report on Behaviour, which recommends that in the future schools will have greater ownership of alternative provision, and will commission from a range of partners including each other and the Voluntary and Community sector.

The final recommendation is that the strategy development work, which has been running separately to the initial project, is led by a dedicated senior post (fixed term) within the structure, aligning the two processes to ensure clarity and consistency in the changing relationship with schools. An update on the Strategy development is below. The senior post will focus on developing the appropriate strategic partnership with schools that will enable the needs of learners to be met in a way that improves outcomes and makes best use of limited resources.

Strategy Development

It is recognised that there needs to be a new SEN/AEN strategy developed to address current and projected levels of demand, especially for BESD and ASD provision. The Policy landscape is also changing with the Children and Families Bill going through Parliament. This Bill, if

enacted will require that children will only have one plan, covering both health and education needs. There is also the strong possibility for personal budgets to be introduced from 2014. Pilot's trialling various options for personal budgets will be reporting in autumn 2012.

The development of the new strategy is underway with an analysis of current provision and performance. An event to engage with providers was held in February 2012. A survey has also been carried out with parents and older young people, and the report on their views will be available in May 2012. A follow up event is scheduled for June 2012 to set out various options for developing the strategy and to identify priorities. These will include:

- the new national funding formula and how pupils with high needs are funded
- the distribution of specialist provision across the county and the aim that fewer pupils need to be educated outside Essex County Council
- increased specialist provision post-16
- future governance of the pupil referral units

It is recognised by the providers that there are funding challenges, and it has been agreed that by sharing these challenges, we need to work through options and opportunities together.

It is planned to complete the strategy, including an approach on estates by November/December 2012, subject to progress on the Bill.

Any involvement and input that scrutiny wishes to make to this work will be welcome.