

Meeting:	Schools Forum
Meeting date:	Friday 10 March 2017
Title of report:	Initial Proposals of the Schools Forum High Needs task and Finish Group for wider consultation
Report by:	Les Knight (Head of Additional Needs) with Group Co-chair Sara Catlow-Hawkins (Headteacher – Bishop of Hereford Bluecoat School)

Classification

Open

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 2, Section 5 (Procedures Prior to Private Meetings) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (Regulations) 2012.

Key decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards affected

Countywide

Purpose

To make initial proposals resulting from the Schools Forum High Needs Task and Finish Group and to seek the views of the Schools Forum.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- a) Schools Forum reviews all of the individual proposals outlined in Table A of the report and provides a view on each.**

Alternative options

1. All of the recommendations potentially provide responses as part of an overall strategy to reduce the pressure on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). It is possible to remove or modify these recommendations without it altering the core purpose of the group as determined by remit given in the terms of reference for the group.

Reasons for recommendations

2. The reasons for the proposals are shown in Table A below. Further detail is provided in Appendix C to F which are the responses from the individual sub-groups.

Table A				
Area	Proposal	Reason(s)	Cost/resource	Risks
(a) Determining the number of specialist places	i. The planned number of special school places by 2026 should be somewhere in the range between 324 and 343 (1.2% of the predicted overall 2-19 school population for 2021) and this should be used as the starting point for any re-modelling of the special school estate as part of the Capital Investment Strategy. Further consideration needs to be given to the designation of need type within this overall figure	This is the proportion of the population placed into special schools nationally. There is no reason why Herefordshire should exceed the national incidence of need, particularly because the evidence from statistical neighbours suggests it is relatively high. In the October 2016 pupil census Herefordshire had 339 special school places which also includes any dual registrations. This indicates that it is already close to the proportion indicated for 2021.	Revenue – minimal as the upper range is 343 and the current number of special school places is 339. Capital Investment Strategy is a self-contained piece of work with its own financial arrangements.	There is a risk that the number of special school places continues to grow. Mitigation is that all concerned need to ensure that assessment is specific enough to ensure that all children placed meet the criteria for specialist places.
	ii. Further consideration needs to be given to the number of places in secondary resourced provision	The national benchmarking data suggests that Herefordshire has fewer secondary resourced provision places. It would be useful to discuss the merits of increasing the number to the national level at the same time as considering the number of special school places and an improved mainstream offer.		
(b) The best offer in mainstream schools to	i. the high needs task group produces a shared statement for an	In order to reduce the pressure on specialist places, all mainstream need to take a	Time for task group	Lack of engagement from schools and settings caused by pressures of

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reduce the need for specialist places	inclusive ethos with examples;	shared responsibility in successfully meeting the needs of as wide a range of pupils as possible		finance and performance. Mitigation: Leaders need to promote this in their respective Forums
	ii. the termly SENCO network meeting organised by Marlbrook Teaching School identifies what further forms of SEN Network meetings would support inclusive practice	Only by sharing successful practice will the whole of the Herefordshire Learning Community become better equipped to address the widest range of SEND	Agenda time at SENCO network meeting and the attendance time at any other network meetings	Not all schools engaged in forums Mitigation: See (b) i
	iii. the termly SENCO network meeting organised by Marlbrook Teaching School identifies gaps in provision which reduce costs to the High Needs Block in the longer term, as well as supporting an inclusive ethos	This will provide an opportunity to gather views from those working directly with SEND in schools	Agenda time at SENCO network meeting	Not all schools engaged in forums Mitigation: See (b) i
	iv. a short time limited project is commissioned to enhance the Herefordshire Local Offer pages with the aim of better supporting SENCOs	The ongoing capacity to address this centrally within the LA is no longer available. A specific and time-limited focus on this would be helpful.enhance the resources available to SENCOs	6 weeks of officer time to meet with SENCOs, to prepare materials and to put on web. (resource as one-off from vacancy savings when they occur)	Offer becomes static after 6 week period Mitigation: SENCO network time could be used once per year to update offer
	v. a project is commissioned which leads to recommendations for the sustainable	All attendees at reviews need to challenge whether everything possible is being done to offer an appropriate offer to those with SEND. It is	No new resource required as project already planned - Project Officer or Consultant time – 1 day per wk for 6 months plus peer-	There is a risk that: i) The resulting AR monitoring system is not realistic and therefore sustainable.

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	monitoring of the quality of annual reviews and for sampling the effectiveness of the provision for those on SEN Support. The use of peer-to-peer learning should be considered.	not possible for the LA to attend every review. The previous arrangements for the monitoring of annual reviews were not sustainable. Monitoring of the progress and provision for children at SEN Support is also an expectation as made clear in the SEND Inspection. By using peer review, learning and reflection about practice is more likely to occur.	to-peer release or cover time (should be seen as CPD). £10k consultant plus peer-to-peer release time This is to be funded through project time funded by centrally held DSG budget (from vacancy savings when they occur).	Mitigation: Project Officer needs to work very closely with schools and SEN team to ensure that system is workable. There is a risk that by not doing this we do not fulfil our duties under the SEND COP.
	vi. there is exploration of the possibility of a system of dual registration for pupils with LD along the lines of the Brookfield Intervention model which allows intensive work between special and mainstream without the presumption to it leading to a special school place	The intervention model used by Brookfield works well for some pupils because of the intensive nature of the placement plus intensive work back into the pupil's host school as outreach.	Meeting time to discuss. Two Options to fund this: (i) Brookfield Intervention model is school contribution from existing pupil-led resource (ii) DSG allocation to specials to establish this work as in-reach/outreach. £50k for one experienced FTE teacher or equivalent time allocation working out of special school (s)	There is a risk that dual registration encourages pupils to seek a special school place. Mitigation: There would need to be a very clear contract with host school that this about supporting the school intensively for a block of time to develop the curriculum for the pupil in the host school
	vii. a minimum offer by all mainstream schools is agreed and used to challenge those schools not meeting this minimum standard	Schools, alongside the LA should publish what all mainstream schools are expected to offer as part of the Local Offer in order that 'What is 'additional to and different from' can be established. This is a statutory requirement. Herefordshire is	LA Officer time and SENCO release time – Work in final draft stage.	There is a risk that the offer described is not specific enough and therefore does not provide the clarity required.

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		not compliant at this point and a final draft should be agreed quickly.		
	viii. a commitment to a minimum amount of SEN experience for teacher training placements and NQTs is sought from schools through training institutions	Initial teacher training can only devote a limited amount of time to SEND. This would be a local arrangement to boost this.	Meeting time for teaching schools to set it up.	There is a risk that ITT establishments do not see this as a priority.
(c) Improving the SEND Post-16 Offer	i. following a time-limited project to explore the co-ordination of employment opportunities funded by the SEN Implementation Grant across the whole county, consideration is given to a sustainable resource to co-ordinate education and employment opportunities in the 16-25 age-range;	A need has been identified for county-wide co-ordination of education and employment opportunities. The current one off grant being co-ordinated through Barrs Court Hub will allow exploration of the employment opportunities for all learners with significant SEND across all settings. There will be an on-going need for this co-ordination.	Current resource is £30k for co-ordination role	Without this post, there is no central co-ordination of this work on employment opportunities which carries the risk that families seek expensive out-of-county provision for young people with LD
	ii. work is undertaken as part of recommendation (j) to develop 'pathways to employment' ;	It is important that there is a route, which is clear to all, by which YP can access supported employment	Included in (c) i.	The risk of not having this would be a lack of clarity for YP and families
	iii. further work is undertaken (linked to the accommodation strategy being developed by the Council's Adult Well-being Directorate) to	Young people often need appropriate and bespoke housing solutions if they are to gain the maximum benefit from their employment opportunities. There is an opportunity to reduce the cost	No new resource required	The risk of not doing this is that we would develop a good education and employment offer that YP would not be able to take up because of where they are

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	provide suitable supported housing solutions that support disabled young people to be able to access suitable education and employment opportunities;	to the high needs block of the DSG as for a proportion of post-19 learners living locally in their own accommodation would have their housing costs met from housing benefit rather than in expensive residential colleges		living.
	iv. post-16 education and training opportunities for students with learning difficulties are mapped and that any gaps in provision are identified as part of the continuing review of post-16 review for those with learning difficulties and disabilities	This has been recognised as an area of work that has not yet been tackled by the Post-16 Review of educational provision. Successful work has led to an improvement in the offer for those with more severe learning difficulties. The focus is now on those with less severe needs. This was identified in the Local Area SEND Inspection.	Professionals time to meet in 2 nd round of Post-16 review	There is a risk that as a result of not having suitable post-16 LD provision locally, places will be sought at independent specialist providers resulting in a further growth in numbers and cost. There is also a risk that post-16 providers will not engage with this work.
	v. following the successful implementation of the post-16 NEET project for those with SEMH, a sustainable means of non-DSG funding is identified to allow the continuation of the project.	SF has supported this in 2016-17 but has indicated that it cannot do so in the future. The model has proved highly successful and therefore alternative funding needs to be sought.	Cost £30k per annum	There is a risk that the successful work in developing this project will be lost with the result that more of those with SEMH needs are NEET. Mitigation: Identify other funding sources
(d) Preventing the need for high-cost residential places particularly for	i. by examining the outcomes of the existing project to explore what works to reduce the risk of high-	Schools Forum granted funding in 2016-17 to explore ways in which children with a high risk of needing out-of-county residential provision can have their needs	No new resource in 2017-18	The risk of doing nothing is that we will continue to have significant expenditure on multi-agency placements out-of-county where monitoring of students is

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ASD/LD and challenging behaviour	cost residential places particularly for ASD/LD and challenging behaviour, the successful elements should be taken forward on a sustainable basis.	addressed locally. 3/7ths of the cost of multi-agency residential provision comes from DSG. This work is underway but will take the duration of 2017-18 to reveal what works.		more difficult. The risk with this project is that successful strategies are identified in the existing project but the young people concerned are so individual that the strategies are not transferrable. However, by adopting an approach that requires every possible strategy to have been considered before we place in an out-of-county setting, it is more likely to produce creative answers.
(e) Improving Early Years provision to prevent later underachievement (and cost)	i. consideration is given to designated educational psychology time for children in the Early Years (aside from providing advice for statutory assessment);	It would be preferable to intervene early with psychological support, rather than waiting for the situation to be exacerbated. Research evidence demonstrates that investment in EY interventions can save at least £3 for every £1 invested.	£12k which could be re-cycled from additional traded EP work.	There is a risk that by not doing this, needs are not addressed early enough. If this is implemented, the risk would be one of excess demand and some sort of priority list would be needed to mitigate this.
	ii. an increased number of Child Development Centre assessment places are made available with outreach opportunities taking place in localities other than Hereford City. This can be achieved by re-organising existing groups;	The priority should be to assess as many EY children at an early stage. This proposal would increase assessment places at CDC from current 10 per term to 22 per term to reflect the current level of demand. It would also allow a wider range of needs to be assessed. The use of outreach assessment is important because some	No new resource – re-arrangement of the existing resource	The risk of not doing this is that children with potentially more severe needs are not assessed early enough (or at all if family cannot get into Hereford). The risk of rearranging the resource is that a group that caters for lower level needs will be removed.

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		families cannot travel into Hereford regularly for assessment visits.		
	iii. with the increasing number of diagnoses of children with ASD in the EY, the number of COSI (Communication and Social Interaction) group places is increased with a commensurate amount of mainstream outreach for children in EY settings being provided;	The COSI group has provided high quality support for families and children with severe social communication needs including the nationally recognised 'Early Bird' parenting programme. The increase in the number of diagnoses (almost doubling to just under 100 per 10000 of the school-age population), many as young as 3 years old, requires additional resource in order to offer the programme to all before they reach reception age and transfer to school. Research evidence has shown that diagnosis and early intervention is cost-effective. Outreach work with the child's EY setting and as the children transfer to school is an integral part of the programme. The numbers are such that previous attempts to manage a waiting list are no longer possible. 5 years ago, there were 7 children for the 6 places. Last year, there were 12.	5 additional COSI places to be made available (2x half day sessions) Specialist outreach into mainstream settings for those not accessing a COSI place(1x half day) Minimum 0.3 fte specialist teacher= £15k. This could be from re-assigning existing resource in LA managed DSG salary budgets.	The risk of not making this provision is that there will be children entering school with severe complex communication needs where early intervention is not possible. There is a potential risk of continued growth in demand as more early diagnoses are made.
	iv. speech and language clinics overseen by speech and language	A previously successful programme of work delivered by SALT assistants overseen	0.4 FTE SALT Assistant = £13.5k. Funding source would need to be identified	If this is not offered, there is a risk of continuing high levels of potentially

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	therapists (SALT) at Children's Centres are developed	<p>by qualified therapists demonstrated the value of this work. These advice clinics give parents earlier access to a SaLT – usually within 4-8 weeks. Appropriate ideas and strategies for intervention are also given. Formal referrals to SALT are more appropriate as a result. (therefore fewer inappropriate referrals increasing the waiting list)</p> <p>This was identified in the Local Area SEND Inspection.</p>	<p>as part of anticipated joint commissioning exercise.</p> <p>Some cost for training could be built into SALT costing provided for EY Task and Finish group</p>	<p>inappropriate referral to SALT which would result in significant delays in referrals being accepted.</p>
	v. consideration is given as to how preventative work/intervention with families who do not meet the Families First criteria can be provided – particularly in relation to children with challenging behaviour as part of Herefordshire's approach to providing Early Help.	<p>Concerns has been raised by EY settings about attachment /behaviour and lack of support for children and families unless at high risk. There are an increasing numbers of referrals through the child development centre for children with SEMH difficulties – often rejected as not seen as 'medical'. These cases can make up more than 1/3 of the monthly referrals.</p>	<p>Costed into EY task and finish group - no new resource required (PIP project on attachment)</p>	<p>Risk to be outlined in EY Task and finish papers</p>

Key considerations

4. As part of a five year funding strategy to ensure that Herefordshire Schools Forum and the council pro-actively manage future funding pressures in the Dedicated Schools Grant, Schools Forum has agreed to set up four task and finish groups. One of these was the High Needs Task and Finish Group (HNTFG). The full terms of reference (TOR) are provided in Appendix A. The TOR included the issues to be addressed by the group. These issues can be summarised as concern for the rising cost of high needs in Herefordshire and in particular the rising number/cost of specialist places. In order to tackle the breadth of the High Needs agenda, the HNTFG set up sub-groups to deal with the different strands as follows:
 - i. **How many special places do we need? (Rec. (a))** Note: Work subsequently added to by Sue Woodrow working as a consultant to the Capital Investment Strategy
 - ii. **What should mainstream schools do to provide the best offer for those with learning difficulties? (Rec (b))**
 - iii. **How do we improve the offer for young people with SEND post-16 (both MLD and SLD/PMLD includes post-19)? (Rec (c))**
 - iv. **How could we prevent high cost residential placements, particularly for ASD/LD and challenging behaviour? (Rec (d))**
 - v. **How could we improve Early Years provision to prevent later underachievement (and cost)? (Rec (e))**
 - vi. **Review of High Needs Matrix** Note: this work was added to the work of the group to save a duplication but was not within the TOR.

Each sub-group reported back to the HNTFG (Appendix C to F) and the recommendations from all of the sub-groups are included in this paper.

5. The sub-groups were asked to provide solutions that would address the issues raised in the TOR. This paper is the collation of the proposals and the aim is to gain broader consultation responses. The HNTFG were made aware that there could be no presumption that the ideas would necessarily be adopted.
6. The contributing sub-groups were also asked to ensure that their proposals had an evidence base that would ensure that this was not just a 'resource and hope' approach but rather one which was likely to ensure improved outcomes for children and young people.
7. Some of the work described within the recommendations has been commenced already as there was felt to be an imperative to do this or because there is a crossover with the work of other groups or strategies. These recommendations are included here for the sake of completeness.

Community impact

8. There are particular links to the children with disabilities, Early Help and Early Years strategies governed by the children and young people's partnership.

Equality duty

9. All of the proposals are intended to have a positive impact on children with SEND.

Financial implications

10. The financial implications are shown in Table A above.

Legal implications

11. A legal viewpoint is not required at this stage of consultation.

Risk management

12. Table A above includes risks and mitigation.

Consultees

13. N/A

Appendices

Appendix A – Terms of reference for Task and Finish Groups

Appendix B – Sub-group composition

Appendix C – Place Planning Briefing

Appendix D – Report from the Best Offer in Mainstream Sub-group

Appendix E – Report from the Improving the Post-16 Offer Sub-Group

Appendix F – Report from the Improving EY Provision Sub-Group

Background papers

- None identified.