

Title of Report:	SEN Inclusion Policy and SEN Development Plan	Item 20
Report to be considered by:	Executive	
Forward Plan Ref:	EX0679	

Corporate Plan Priority:	S4: To achieve better and fairer outcomes for children and young people by delivering high quality integrated services through partnership.
The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Corporate Plan priority by:	
1.	<i>Improving opportunities for pupils with SEN and increasing inclusion.</i>
2.	<i>Improving outcomes for children with SEN.</i>

Purpose of Report: To report the outcome of the SEN review consultation and to seek approval for the SEN Inclusion Policy & Development Plan 2004-2009.

Recommended Action: The SEN Inclusion Policy and Development Plan 2004-2009 is approved for publication.

Reason for decision to be taken:

- There is a need for the Council to have an SEN Inclusion Policy and Development Plan in place.

List of other options considered:

- Not applicable.

Key background documentation:

- Summary of Consultation Responses
- SEN Inclusion Policy & SEN Development Plan 2004-2009.

Portfolio Member:	Councillor Mollie Lock
Tel. No.:	0118 933 2858
E-mail Address:	Mlock@westberks.gov.uk

Contact Officer Details

Name:	Jane Pritchard
Job Title:	Service Development Manager, SEN Inclusion/Early Years & Childcare
Tel. No.:	01635 519783
E-mail Address:	Jpritchard@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

- Policy:** The proposed SEN Inclusion Policy brings West Berkshire Council in line with national expectations on the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. The statutory framework for SEN states that children with statements of special educational need must be educated in mainstream schools unless this would be incompatible with
- (a) the wishes of the child's parents
 - (b) the provision of efficient education of other children.
- If concerns exist about compatibility with the efficient education of other children, "reasonable steps" must be taken to remove the incompatibility. There is an expectation that the number of cases in which reasonable steps cannot be taken will be very few.
- Financial:** The majority of activities in the SEN Development Plan have no resource implications other than officer time. Most of the remaining activities can either be funded through external grant, e.g. SEN Standards Fund, or through redistribution of existing resources.
- The only activity on the Development Plan with significant financial implications is the colocation of special schools with mainstream schools. Feasibility work on colocation of The Castle School's primary and secondary departments (the nursery is already colocated) is at a very early stage. However, the project would be at least partly self-financing through site disposal. Further reports will be brought to the Executive as work progresses. Feasibility work on Brookfields School colocation has not yet begun.
- Personnel:** The majority of activities in the report do not have personnel implications. However, section 3 of the Development Plan includes a proposal to consult on the possible closure of the Robert Sandilands Assessment Resource. Closure of this resource would result in possible redundancy of two part time (0.5) nursery nurses. A further report will be brought back to Executive following consultation.
- Property:** Colocation of the special schools would have Property implications. Further detailed reports will be brought to the Executive as feasibility work proceeds.

Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 In the autumn term 2003, a review of the current SEN (Special Educational Needs) Policy and Development Plan was initiated. A Steering Group was set up to oversee the process, with detailed work delegated to 9 Task Groups. The Task Groups considered the following specific areas:-

Early Years
Inclusion
Monitoring and Tracking
Autistic Spectrum Disorder
Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
Physical Disability/Medical
Sensory Impairment
Specific Learning Difficulties
Speech and Language Difficulties

- 1.2 The Steering Group and Task Groups included broad representation from schools, including Headteachers, SENCOs and staff from specialist provision, e.g. special schools, resourced schools, Language and Literacy Centres and Pupil Referral Units. A wide range of relevant services and agencies were also involved, including the Educational Psychology Service, Learning Support Teams, Social Care, Health and relevant voluntary groups, including parent representation.
- 1.3 Task Groups were given data on existing provision and services and were asked to map existing services, identify strengths and weaknesses, consider progress against targets in the existing SEN Development Plan and propose new targets for inclusion in the new SEN Development Plan.
- 1.4 The process was overseen at all stages by the Steering Group to ensure consistency. Careful consideration was given to changes in legislation since the existing SEN Policy and Development Plan was produced, in particular the 2001 SEN & Disability Act and the 2001 SEN Code of Practice (revised). Current national policy on SEN was also taken into account, including the Government's SEN Strategy, "Removing Barriers to Achievements", published in February 2004.
- 1.5 In May 2004, the Steering Group produced a draft SEN Inclusion Policy & SEN Development Plan 2004-5 and this was approved by Individual Member Decision on 4th June 2004 as a draft for consultation.

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1 Consultation took place during the summer term 2004. Consultation documents were sent to all Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of West Berkshire schools and all parents of statemented pupils. In addition, the document was sent to relevant services within the Council, local Primary Care Trusts, neighbouring LEAs, non maintained special schools within the area and those which have West Berkshire pupils placed in them, local FE Colleges, the Learning & Skills Council and relevant voluntary groups (such as Mencap, Scope, Autistic Society etc.) A full list of consultees is available on request.

2.2 It was not feasible to send the consultation document to all parents of children with SEN, as pupils with SEN could represent up to 20% of the school age population. However, a press release was issued and there was publicity in the local newspapers and on local radio so that parents would be aware of how to obtain a copy of the consultation document. Three public consultation meetings were also held as follows:-

22nd June - Denefield School
 24th June - The Castle School
 28th June - John O'Gaunt School

Issues raised at these meetings were recorded as part of the consultation.

2.3 In total, there were 92 written responses to the consultation. 84 questionnaires were completed and 8 respondents sent in a general reply. The responses broke down as follows:-

	<u>Questionnaire</u>	<u>General Response</u>	<u>Total</u>
Parents	45	3	8
Schools/Governors	12	3	15
Unidentified	21	0	21
Other Agencies	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>
	<u>84</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>92</u>

2.4 The following questions elicited the largest number of "disagree" responses.

Do you agree with the general principles of the SEN Inclusion Policy?

7 out of 84 respondents (8%) said no. These consisted of 6 parents and 1 unidentified respondent.

Do you agree with the future role envisaged for special schools?

6 out of 84 respondents (7%) said no. All 6 respondents were parents.

Do you agree with the proposed strategies for meeting the needs of children with complex SEN?

9 out of 84 respondents (11%) said no. These consisted of 8 parents and 1 school.

Analysis of the "comments" sections of the questionnaire shows that these responses all relate to concerns about the proposal to colocate the Council's two special schools, The Castle School and Brookfields School, with mainstream schools. The parents concerned are anxious that their children would be vulnerable in a colocated special school and that their specialist support would be diluted. Clearly, there is a lot of work to do in addressing these concerns and reassuring parents that colocation can, and indeed does, work very effectively to the benefit of all pupils, including the most vulnerable pupils. There will be further opportunities for discussion with parents about these issues as more detailed colocation proposals are developed and consulted on. However, it should be noted that 8 parents expressed these views. To put this in context, 340 children in total attend The Castle and Brookfields Schools, and all of their parents were sent the consultation document.

2.5 The SEN Inclusion Policy and SEN Development Plan 2004-9 has been amended to take account of the consultation responses. It is attached at Appendix 2. Members are asked to approve the document for publication in the autumn term 2004.

3 Implementation

3.1 Implementation of the SEN Inclusion Policy and SEN Development Plan will begin in the autumn term 2004, subject to approval. Progress on implementation of the Plan will be overseen by the SEN Review Steering Group. Regular reports will be made to Members on progress.

Appendices

Appendix 20(a) - Summary of SEN Review Consultation Responses

Appendix 20(b) - SEN Inclusion Policy and SEN Development Plan 2004-9 (*Please note that due to the size of this Appendix a copy can be requested from Anne Hunter 01635 519241 and a copy will be held in the Members' Room*)

Consultation Responses

Local Stakeholders: See section 2 of this report and Appendix 20(a)

Officers Consulted: Ian Pearson
Gabrielle Esplin

Trade Union: