
Alternative Provision: Joint Strategic Review of Pupil Referral Service.

Report being considered by: Schools Forum
On: 05/12/16
Report Author: Caroline Simmonds
Item for: Discussion **By:** All forum members

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek comment and input on the proposals on *Alternative Education Provision: Education Plan for young people with additional needs*, arising from the public consultation.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 For information and comment.

Will the recommendation require the matter to be referred to the Council or the Executive for final determination?	Yes: X	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Introduction/Background

- 3.1 The process of consultation:

- A Joint Strategic Review was established in November 2014 to determine the future of Alternative Provision in West Berkshire.
- A pre-consultation exercise was undertaken with secondary Headteachers in the summer 2015. A paper was brought to The Schools Forum on 25th May 2016 to seek comment and input on the 'Alternative Provision: Education Plan for young people with additional needs.
- The proposals were shared with the staff of the Reintegration Service and Alternative Curriculum staff at meetings on the 5th July 2016 as the education plan was being published.
- Following these meetings and discussions a formal consultation on Alternative Provision was posted on the West Berkshire website and closed on 27th September 2016 as a result of which some changes were made to the proposal.
- The Statutory notice, reflecting these changes, was posted on the West Berkshire website on the 24th October and closed on 21st November 2016.

3.2 Background to the restructuring of the Pupil Referral Units:

Like many councils, we have to make difficult decisions about how we spend money. We can no longer afford to deliver Alternative Provision in the same way. We have explored how we could deliver education to vulnerable pupils differently.

Following informal consultation with schools and discussions with the Joint Strategic Review group, we developed an 'Education Plan for alternative provision for young people with additional needs'. It stated that we would:

- I. Work in partnership with schools, and schools will work in partnership with each other, to integrate education for students with additional needs
- II. Ensure there is sufficient provision for those students who cannot attend mainstream school.
- III. Ensure provision for those students that the Council may become responsible for pupils who are permanently excluded from school or to avoid them from being permanently excluded. This will be achieved by consolidating the current arrangement of 2 schools and 6 sites, into a single Alternative Education Provision Service (AEPS). The AEPS will comprise a single school, with a single Headteacher, delivering the service on 4 sites.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 The public consultation took place between 5th July and 17th October. The document 'Alternative Provision for young people with additional needs Education Plan' was posted on the West Berkshire website. There were 45 responses to the consultation from staff, schools, organisations and service users or someone who cares for a service user.

4.2 Proposals as an outcome of the public consultation:

- The reorganisation will proceed as per the original timetable.
- The two current services will merge to become one new Alternative Education Provision (AEP).
- Sites will reduce from 6-4, but the actual sites to be retained be further reviewed
- Pupil numbers to be further reviewed. It is noted that this is the most significant issue raised.
- That Home Education will remain as part of the new Alternative Education Provision service for 2017/18 but may be reviewed again to ensure efficient use of resources and best outcomes for young people.

4.3 The Statutory notice was posted on the West Berkshire website between 24th October and 21st November. There were no formal responses to the consultation although the JSR group and Management Committee and Headteachers were informed of the notice.

Alternative Provision: Joint Strategic Review of Pupil Referral Service.

- 4.4 The Head of Education received two informal representations both of which raised the issue of pupil places which has been addressed via the public consultation.
- 4.5 The JSR, which met on 04/11/2016, considered which sites to maintain and determined to approve the original proposal to cease to operate from Riverside and Moorside.
- 4.6 A subgroup of the JSR met on 22/11/2016 and agreed the new numbers for the AEP, these were then endorsed by members of the full JSR through electronic consultation. The revised agreed proposed numbers are:
- Primary 12 – no change from current numbers
 - Secondary 46 – an increase of 10 from the original proposal
 - Post 16 – 8 but as the students are not full time they will be able to support 12 students which is no different from current numbers.

The AEP will look at differing models of provision and move where possible to a proactive, rather than a reactive service.

The number of pupil places does not necessarily represent the number of pupils whose needs can be met by the service.

The new staffing structure for the service will support and facilitate brokerage for individual students.

5. Options for Consideration

- 5.1 We have previously considered leaving the service, which is seen as OFSTED as good, unchanged but this is not financially sustainable in the current climate.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The AEPS will work with officers to determine staffing structure and contracts based on what is affordable within their budget.
- 6.2 The AEPS will work with officers to determine teaching and learning provision, based on the needs of the student. Flexible provision and Outreach will be tailored to meet the needs of schools.
- 6.3 We have looked at the current levels of income and expenditure and built a cost model for the AEPS. There will be a saving between the cost model for the current PRUS and the proposed AEPS. The savings are delivered by scaling down the size of the Service (from 84 to 66 students, and from 6 to 4 sites); by delivering efficiencies in costs across budget lines, including management and staffing reductions.
- 6.4 As a result of being able to reduce charges payable by commissioners, and the places not being supported from the central element of the High Needs Block, there will be a saving to this budget, which will help reduce the pressure on the High Needs Block.
- 6.5 The possible savings to the budget cannot be confirmed until the proposals for the 'Alternative Provision: for young people with additional needs' have been approved

by the council and subsequently the new structure for the service established and costed.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Following Council decision on the 19th January the plan for the Alternative Education Provision be implemented from September 2017.

8. Consultation and Engagement

- 8.1 This report has been commented on by Councillor Lynne Doherty, Rachael Wardell (Communities Director), Ian Pearson (Head of Education), Cathy Burnham (Service Manager), Abi Witting (HR), Claire White (Finance), Rachel Craggs (Equalities), Leigh Hogan (Legal) and Chrys Healey acting Chair of the PRU Management Committee.
- 8.2 The Consultation documents have been considered by the Joint Strategic Review Group which includes Councillors, mainstream school representatives, Council Officers, the two Headteachers from the current PRUS and the Chair and Vice Chair of the PRUS Management Committee. The documents have also been considered, through public consultation, by service users or their carers, organisations, staff, Headteachers and schools through public consultation.
- 8.3 The timetable for the implementation of the plan is as follows, with implementation of the final in September 2017.

Consultation Timescales	Dates
Schools Forum	5 December 2016
Corporate Board	6 December 2016
Operations Board	22 December 2016
Executive Decision	19 January 2017
Formal Consultation with Staff and Trades Unions	January – March 2017
Implementation Plan approved, including any outcomes of competitive appointment process, and formal notice provided to staff	May 2017