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# Alternative Provision for Young People with Additional Needs - Education Plan: Summary and Full Report

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| <b>Committee considering report:</b>        | Executive                |
| <b>Date of Committee:</b>                   | 19 January 2017          |
| <b>Portfolio Member:</b>                    | Councillor Lynne Doherty |
| <b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b> | 29 November 2016         |
| <b>Report Author:</b>                       | Caroline Simmonds        |
| <b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>                    | EX3164                   |

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To approve the restructuring of the Pupil Referral Units from two services, Reintegration Service and Alternative Curriculum, into a single service providing Alternative Education Provision. (Final title to be agreed)

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the 2 current services, Reintegration Service and Alternative Curriculum should merge to become a single Alternative Education Provision. Reduce the number of sites from 6 – 4, thus reducing duplication of management, building and administrative costs. To provide a single unified service which can offer consistent support and provision for pupils and schools.
- 2.2 To approve the savings that are to be delivered by scaling down the size of the Service from 84 to 66 pupil places thus delivering efficiencies in costs across budget lines, including staffing reductions; and by removing the Council contribution (centrally retained DSG) to the cost of pupil places. All savings will be within the DSG.
- 2.3 The council has traditionally funded places at the PRU's but over time funding has shifted to the schools. The proposal means that the Council will no longer contribute to placements commissioned directly by schools, thus making a saving to the High Needs Block, which will help reduce the pressure in this block.
- 2.4 That the new service commence in September 2017.

## 3. Implications

- 3.1 **Financial:** The council can no longer afford to deliver Alternative Provision in the same way, therefore funding for the new service will be restructured. The aim of the restructuring is to provide a budget saving to address other high need block pressures while still providing a good education for students out of school. There is a substantial proposed

budget saving which is as yet to be fully quantified.

**3.2 Policy:**

No policy implications.

**3.3 Personnel:**

As a result of the amalgamation it is expected that there will be a reduction in the number of staff, this will be based on a structural plan for the AEP developed by the provisional Head designate. In line with policy, there will be a consultation with staff and the unions between January and March 2017. There will then be formal recruitment process, in line with statutory guidance, for the staff from both services and based on their knowledge and skills.

**3.4 Legal:**

The council is responsible for providing suitable fulltime education for permanently excluded pupils and other pupils who because of illness or other reasons would not receive suitable education, the proposals will not affect the council's ability to meet this requirement. If the amalgamation is approved, a formal application will be made to the DFE for the closure of the Reintegration Service and changes to the Alternative Education including a change of name.

**3.5 Risk Management:**

The reduction in pupil places could place a pressure on schools and the AEP. However to alleviate this, the service will work in partnership with schools and schools will work in partnership with each other to support and integrate pupils with additional needs. In addition a Pupil Placement Panel will ensure that those pupils most in need are provided with places in the AEP.

The restructuring will lead to a reduction in staffing, there is a possibility that experienced staff might leave during a time of uncertainty. The provisional Headteacher designate and HR are working closely to reduce this risk by keeping the staff informed, involving staff in developing the new structure and ensuring a fair recruitment process.

**3.6 Property:**

Reduction in the number of sites from 6-4 with the proposal that the PRUs in the 2 shared buildings, which have been deemed by OFSTED as not fit for purpose, are closed. The sites are Moorside Community Centre in Thatcham and Riverside Community Centre in Clay Hill, Newbury. Alternative uses for these assets will be subject to review.

**3.7 Other:**

A public consultation has been undertaken and in general there was approval for the restructuring of the service, however there was concern expressed at the proposed reduction in places. As a consequence the number of KS4 places has been increased by 10 places from 36 to 46. However, the proposed number of places will be kept under review.

## **4. Other options considered**

- 4.1 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.

- 4.2 The Management Committee of the two services discussed the possibility of establishing an Academy but voted not to proceed down that route at this stage.
- 4.3 We considered passing all of the funding to schools to deliver Alternative Provision themselves, which would have removed the Council-maintained PRUS, and rely on the use of alternative provision providers from a range of sources. However, it was felt this would not provide the best arrangement for West Berkshire students and would not guarantee meeting the councils statutory duties. This was also the view expressed during the pre-consultation exercise with secondary Headteachers in Summer 2015.

## **5. Executive Summary**

- 5.1 The proposal: To restructure the service for students who the council might become responsible for because of permanent exclusion or the risk of permanent exclusion.

- 5.2 The plan:

Is to change the way in which Alternative Provision is delivered in West Berkshire and for the schools to work in partnership with the new provision to enable students to learn in the setting that best suits them and their needs.

To achieve a DSG budget saving through the restructuring of the existing structure of the Pupil Referral Units. Currently there are 2 separate services Alternative Curriculum and Reintegration Service each of which has a separate DFE number and management structure. We propose that the services are amalgamated to form one Alternative Education Provision with one management team and one DFE number.

To achieve a budget saving by reducing management, staffing and administration costs through efficiencies, removing duplication and integrating service

To reduce the number of PRUs from 6 to 4 and the number of pupil places from 84 – 66 to achieve this, the proposed number of pupil places is.

- Primary 12 – no change from current numbers
- Secondary 46 – an increase of 10 from the original proposal and a reduction of 14 from current numbers
- 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.

To develop the structure of the proposed service to provide a co-ordinated and continuous service which will best support the needs of the students.

To provide brokerage service for schools to enable them to work with and support each other and the pupils within a mainstream setting.

- 5.3 Consultation:

The Consultation has been comprehensive and 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 PRU Management Committee. The proposals have

also been considered, through public consultation, by service users or their carers, organisations, staff, Headteachers and schools.

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 and a paper was brought to The Schools Forum on 25<sup>th</sup> 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 from the Reintegration Service and Alternative Curriculum at meetings on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2016 as the education plan was being published

After these meetings and discussions a formal consultation on Alternative Provision was posted on the West Berkshire website and closed on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2016 as a result of which some changes were made to the proposal.

A Statutory notice, reflecting these changes, was posted on the West Berkshire website on the 24<sup>th</sup> October and closed on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 no formal representations were received although two e-mails on the subject were considered.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The council can no longer afford to deliver Alternative Provision in the same way, we therefore propose that the current provision for pupils with additional needs should be restructured. We advise that the two existing services should be united to provide one service which would offer a budget saving while still providing a good education for students out of school. The savings will be achieved through a reduction of management, staffing and administration costs through efficiencies, removing duplication and integrating services. In addition the number of units will be reduced from 6 – 4 and pupil places reduced by 14 overall.
- 6.2 The service provided to students will be enhanced through there being a single co-ordinated service with one staffing structure. It will work in partnership with mainstream schools to ensure inclusion and enable students to learn in the setting that best suits them and their needs. The AEP will be proactive when working with schools and pupils and provide a brokerage service for schools so they can work together to meet the requirements of pupils with additional needs.
- 6.3 The proposed Alternative Education Provision will provide a budget saving to the DSG High Needs Block which will help to reduce pressure on this block.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix A – Consultation Document 'Alternative provision for young people with additional needs' Education Plan.
- 7.2 Appendix B – Feedback on Consultation
- 7.3 Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment