
'iCollege' – Review of Places and Accommodation

Report being considered by: Heads Funding Group
On: 28/11/2017
Report Author: Jacque Davies and Caroline Simmonds
Item for: Recommend **By:** All Members

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update members of the group on the establishment of the iCollege and the current situation and proposals for the future.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Heads' Funding Group approve the proposed expansion of places and accommodation to accommodate six additional EHC places.

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

- 3.1 The new structure of the service has been in place since 1st September 2017 and is still bedding in. 'iCollege' consists of 4 sites, offers 66 places
- 3.2 Schools Forum on the 19/06/2017 asked that 'the structure and cost of the new service be reviewed in 2017/18. That a working group of Headteachers be set up by the Headteacher of 'iCollege' and the work undertaken would be completed by 1st September 2018.
- 3.3 As requested the Headteacher set up a working group to review the structure of the new service. The group consisted of Jacque Davies, Lucy Hillyard, Chris Davies, Paul Dick, Chris Prosser and Antony Gallagher. They met under the banner of the Schools Forum and the first meeting was held on the 26/09/2017.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1 **The review group:** The brief for the review was: 'The structure and cost of the new service would be reviewed in 2017/18. A working group of Headteachers would be set up by the Headteacher of 'iCollege' and the work undertaken should be completed by 1st September 2018'

The first meeting was held on 26.09.17 the agenda was designed to cover:

- The staff structure
- The cost of the service and

- The delivery and curriculum offer

At the meeting the Heads discussed:

- The huge changes that had taken place in amalgamating the services.
- The developing offer that the Headteacher / service hopes to be able to provide in the future. And
- The current costs and the proposed costs from April 2018 and the implications this would have on school budgets. This was also seen as a perverse incentive.

As a result the minutes of that meeting recorded:

- We strongly recommend to colleague heads and to the Forum that the review is delayed until early 2018, so that the new service can be reviewed while in operation. And
- We recommend freezing the charges for schools as they are today and extend those to 31st August 2018 (as currently proposed). This will give time for the service to bed in and for Heads and the Local Authority to lay out properly the options going forward.

The Headteacher of 'iCollege' and the Local Authority are therefore seeking guidance from the Forum on how they want this review to proceed.

4.2 **The current provision:** The authority believes the service that has been designed and developed is the right size for the number of pupils requiring support. However, currently a number of the places within the senior units are taken up with pupils who have an ECHP and at primary with pupils who are being assessed for or awaiting an ECHP. As a result places have become blocked and there is a problem with the through flow of pupils. The authority is looking to rectify the problem at the senior end and the BIT team is reviewing the situation for the primary years. This does mean that there is currently pressure on places.

4.3 **SEN pupils:** There have been a significant number of referrals from the SEN&D service to iCollege. This is because a number of specialist provisions have closed down or failed Ofsted inspections. As a result, the SEN&D team have been referring students to the iCollege. PRU provision for these pupils is seen by the authority as being both cost effective and appropriate. However, this means that the places within the service have been filled very quickly.

To remediate this, the LA is planning to extend the provision at one of the existing PRU sites to provide additional places for pupils with an EHCP. These pupils will be funded through their EHC plan and will then not count against the planned roll of the service. The LA has received money from Central Government for SEN capital funding and this will be used to build a new facility.

Once the resource has been built the capacity of the service will be 66 pupils with an additional 6 places for pupils with SEN.

4.4 **Replacement of the property in Calcot:** The base at Calcot 'Integration' (x Badgers Hill) is in temporary buildings which are old and no longer fit for purpose

and therefore has to be removed and rebuilt. An options appraisal has been conducted and the conclusion is that the provision should be rebuilt on the existing site. The funding for this is already in the capital budget. At this stage the time scale for the rebuild has not been set.

- 4.5 Inspection:** PRUs are inspected under the same regime as other schools and therefore has to ensure that it meets the same standards in all areas. Due to the changes to the service the Governors sought for any inspection to be deferred. An inspection is likely to take place in the 19/20 academic year. Both the old services were rated as good and it is therefore the aim to retain or improve this standard. To this end the Heads Funding Group need to be mindful of the impact on this developing service of any decisions they make.

5. Options for Consideration

- 5.1 Premises:** Short / medium term plans for premises are as outlined above. However in the longer term it may be more financially beneficial if the spread of sites could be reduced further. This could reduce staffing, transport and running costs.
- 5.2 Review of the service:** The situation regarding the review needs to be clarified as it is unsettling for both the Headteacher and the service to be unsure of the future and what changes might be required to the service. The Forum need to consider if:
- The review could restart with the original brief.
 - If a new brief should be developed for the review.
 - The review should be cancelled and the current structure and funding for the service remain as they are.
- 5.3 Funding:** The review group proposed that the agreement in relation to funding should be delay and that charges should not be made to schools as originally agreed. This is the subject of a separate report.

6. Proposals

- 6.1** Accommodation is expanded to allow for six new EHC places to be added to the planned roll of iCollege

7. Conclusion

- 7.1** The provision of additional EHC places will free up places for non EHC mainstream transfers

8. Consultation and Engagement

- 8.1** The Heads' Funding Group / Schools Forum will need to take a view about any further review work.

9. Appendices

- 9.1** None