

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

## **REPORT TO: Children and Families Scrutiny Committee**

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**Date of Meeting: 19 October 2010**

**Report of: Lorraine Butcher, Director of Children's Services**

**Subject/Title: Special Educational Needs Review**

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### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee of the Children and Families review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision and progress made to date.

### **2.0 Decision Requested**

- 2.1 That the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee comment on the scope of the review, note the progress made in the review and request further updates on progress during the course of the review.

### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 Ensure the appropriate scrutiny of the SEN review as it progresses

### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All

### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All

### **6.0 Policy Implications**

- 6.1 The full impact of the review's proposal on Council policies is still emerging as the review progresses.

### **7.0 Financial Implications for Transition Costs (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

- 7.1 Clearly there will be financial implications from the emerging proposals but these are yet to be fully developed.

## **8.0 Financial Implications 2009/10 and beyond (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

8.1 To be developed

## **9.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

9.1 Many proposals from the review will have to adhere to the current legislation and regulations relating to SEN and school organisation. The Coalition Government has published a Green Paper on SEN and any proposals will have regard to any future legislation.

## **10.0 Risk Management**

10.1 The financial position of Children and Families will impact on the ability to deliver an appropriate range of provision. Therefore, savings realised by not placing and transporting children and young people with SEN across and out of borough in specialist provision could be used to develop more local provision.

## **11.0 Background**

11.1 Cheshire East has a number of legacy policies, guidance and provisions for children and young people with SEN. Since Local Government Reorganisation the range of provision, both specialist and resourced has been significantly reduced and the policy and practices of the former County Council need revising and updating.

11.2 The review is also taking place at a time when the Coalition Government has issued a Green Paper in which they are considering a range of options, including:-

- how to give parents a choice of educational settings that can meet their child's needs
- transforming funding for children with SEN and disabilities and their families,
- making the system more transparent and cost-effective while maintaining a high quality of service
- preventing the unnecessary closure of special schools and involving parents in any decisions about the future of special schools
- supporting young people with SEN and disabilities post-16 to help them succeed after education
- improving diagnosis and assessment to identify children with additional needs earlier

11.3 In Autumn 2009, initial work was undertaken by Senior Officers to scope current/initial arrangements for meeting the needs of pupils with SEN in Cheshire East. This involved a statistical review of SEN numbers, placements and progress.

11.4 The underlying principle of the review is to ensure that the Local Authority provides a sustainable service which provides best value for money and is transparent and accountable and that it improves levels of educational achievement and attainment for pupils with SEN. The review must enhance opportunities for all pupils to have an entitlement, if appropriate, to be educated in mainstream schools. Furthermore, it should ensure effective integrated partnerships to ensure pupils with the most complex needs have access to appropriate highly specialised local provision, early and effective intervention and an effective integrated approach to service delivery for children and their families

11.5 The review has five work streams

- Resource provision and services for SEN
- SEN funding
- Pathways and Access to SEN services
- Specialist provision
- Policy, guidance and protocols

#### 11.6 **Resource provision and services for SEN.**

This work stream is currently examining the location, roles, practice and impact of the 11 primary and 6 secondary resourced provisions attached to mainstream schools across the borough. The group is examining pupil attainment and achievement in these settings and the range of delivery models. Headteachers, pupils and parents are being consulted on the roles of the provision and on the development of future models of delivery. This group is also reviewing the central support services for SEN pupils and how this is delivered to schools. The impact of such a service on outcomes for children is also under review.

#### 11.7 **SEN funding**

The funding of individual pupils with SEN, without a statement, in mainstream schools continues to rely on an expensive bureaucratic assessment process which is perceived not to deliver funding to support individual pupils in a timely way.

The Local Management of Schools (LMS) Funding Formula review group is looking at ways of devolving as much Individual Pupil Funding (IPF) through school budgets. This will result in decisions around

support to individual pupils being delivered in a timely fashion avoiding the need to escalate issues resulting in more costly interventions.

In July this year the Coalition Government issued a consultation paper on the schools formula and the Pupil Premium. The Pupil Premium is intended to be targeted at pupils with additional needs including SEN. The formula review group, whilst continuing to work on the models of mainstream funding are delaying the review of IPF element until the Pupil Premium proposals become clearer.

The group is not reviewing the Special School Funding formula as this was undertaken two years ago and it is just bedding in.

### **11.8 Pathways and Access to SEN Services**

One most common cause of complaint and frustration by parents and teachers of children with SEN is how to access appropriate support and advice in a timely fashion. This working group is reviewing current pathways and access arrangements to services, support and advice. The group is seeking the views of parents in identifying blockages in the systems and to help develop clear pathways to advice, guidance and support in relation to children and young people with SEN.

### **11.9 Specialist provision**

The Local Government Review resulted in Cheshire having only 4 of the 14 SEN schools that existed in the former County Council. The borough has 2 all age special schools that cater for children with severe and complex needs and 2 that cater for secondary aged pupils with behaviour, social and emotional needs. As a result of the disaggregation the authority is increasingly reliant on other Local Authority schools to cater for some children whose needs cannot be met in our schools and maintains a reliance on the independent sector for some complex cases. This work stream is examining the current and projected demand for special schools places and will make costed proposals to establish a high quality range of provision that meets the needs of children and their families in the borough. The group is also planning the establishment of Pupil Referral Unit in the borough.

### **11.10 Policy, guidance and protocols**

The authority has inherited a range of strategies, policies and guidance from the former County Council. Whilst much of this documentation remains relevant it does not sit in one document and does not reflect the aims and ambitions of Cheshire East Council. This work stream, in consultation with schools and parents, is reviewing all the policies and guidance in detail and will bring forward proposals later in this academic term.

## **12.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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