

<b>Mayor &amp; Cabinet</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	Strengthening Specialist Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs	
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	
<b>Ward</b>	All	
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Directors for Children and Young People, Regeneration, Resources, Head of Law & Head of Access & Support	
<b>Class</b>		Date: 03.10.07

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the response to the formal consultation on the Strengthening of Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs Proposals. Taking account of the consultation it sets out proposals for the future organisation of provision for children with special educational needs in mainstream and special schools and services needed to support them.

## 2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report is seeking the Mayor's approval to improve provision for children with special educational needs so that there is a continuum of provision of special schools, specialist resource bases in mainstream and mainstream provision. It proposes that a range of specialist provision is made for children with SEN. Proposals also include a management of change programme to be developed that will increase the range of training available to Lewisham teachers and support staff.

## 3. Policy Context

- 3.1 Lewisham's Children and Young People's Plan sets out our vision for improving outcomes for all children. It articulates the need to improve outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities by ensuring that their needs are met. This is consistent with the Government's 10 year strategy Removing Barriers to Achievement which sets out five key objectives:

- Build capacity in the children's workforce to enable them to identify and meet children's needs
- Promote a continuum of local provision
- Improve accountability for the outcomes children achieve
- Strengthen partnerships with parents and children
- Improve provision for children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties and children with Autism.

## 4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That the Mayor:

4.1.1 notes the outcomes of the formal consultation;

4.1.2 considers whether to endorse the principles set out in Section 10 to underpin Lewisham's policy and provision for children with SEN;

- 4.1.3 agrees to increase capacity of mainstream schools to meet children's SEN and approve a range of measures to enhance this capacity as summarised in Section 12;
- 4.1.4 agrees to the publication of statutory proposals to change the provision at the following primary schools to provide new resource bases with specialist staff for children with SEN:
- John Ball Primary – Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
  - Tidemill Primary – Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
  - Perrymount Primary – Complex Physical and Medical needs
  - Forster Park Primary – Speech Language and Communication (SLCN);
- 4.2 agrees to the publication of statutory proposals to change the provision at the following secondary schools to provide new resource bases with specialist staff for children with SEN:
- Catford High – Learning Difficulty and Disability
  - Addey & Stanhope - Speech Language and Communication Needs;
- 4.3 considers whether, in light of consultation, to increase specialist primary places further and, if so, to ask officers to begin consultation on a change of provision at Holbeach Primary to provide a new resource base with specialist staff for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD);
- 4.4 considers whether, in light of consultation, to increase specialist secondary places further and, if so, to ask officers to begin consultation on a change of provision at Bonus Pastor Secondary School to provide a new resource base with specialist staff for children with Speech Language and Communication Needs;
- 4.5 considers the revised accommodation strategy and agrees to the publication of statutory proposals to change the location and provision at Brent Knoll school as set out at paragraph 12.15;
- 4.6 if recommendation 4.5 is agreed then to consider whether to delay the phasing out of the primary provision at Brent Knoll until sufficient primary resource base places are available;
- 4.7 agrees to begin the competition process for the establishment of a new ASD school for children aged 4 – 19 on the Pendragon School site and to begin the statutory process for the associated closure of Meadowgate and Pendragon Special Schools;
- 4.8 considers whether, in light of consultation, to develop a new ASD outreach service in advance of the new school opening;
- 4.9 agrees that the medical service be managed by Abbey Manor College;
- 4.10 considers whether, in light of consultation, the Parent Partnership Service should be extended in order to strengthen the partnership with parents.
- 4.11 agrees that monitoring and accountability arrangements for SEN are strengthened.

## 5. Background

- 5.1 The Local Authority (LA) has a duty under the Education Act 1996 to secure a sufficient number of school places to meet the needs of the local child population. It requires the LA in particular to have regard to the need to secure that special educational provision is made for pupils with SEN. Section 315 requires LAs to keep their arrangements for SEN provision under review.
- 5.2 The Government expects that there should be a range of provision for children who have special educational needs. This includes provision in mainstream and special schools and provision in specialist resource bases in mainstream schools. The OFSTED Report – “Inclusion: does it matter where pupils are taught?” (2006) concluded that the key to improved outcomes for children with SEN access to specialist teaching and that, when this is provided in a mainstream school, pupils can make better progress and have a more rounded experience.
- 5.3 In reviewing the capacity of Lewisham schools, consideration therefore has to be given to the type and range of provision in order to meet needs appropriately. The intention is to ensure that all children, wherever they are educated, have a good education that enables them to achieve to the full and prepares them well for adult life.
- 5.4 A report to Children and Young People Select Committee on 4 July 2006 set out the capacity of Lewisham schools in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs. It showed that current provision of specialist places is insufficient and many pupils have to travel to schools outside the borough. The report made some suggestions on how to restructure provision in order to meet demand for places in the future. It was agreed that informal consultation should take place in order to obtain opinion about options to be considered as part of a formal consultation process.
- 5.5 Informal consultation with stakeholders was carried out during the Autumn Term 2006. This included the special schools directly affected, mainstream schools, parents, students, trade unions, voluntary organisations and professionals providing services to children. Following the informal consultation, the options were modified and a report was prepared for Mayor and Cabinet on 10 January 2007 seeking agreement to formal consultation.
- 5.6 The report to Mayor and Cabinet on 10 January 2007 included statistical evidence that Lewisham has a relatively high proportion of children with statements of SEN as a proportion of all children aged 0-19. In 2006 this was 2.3% compared with 2.08% for London and 1.98% nationally. The number of pupils with a statement has declined slightly in recent years but is still relatively high compared to our statistical neighbours. This reflects in part the progress other local authorities have made in delegating or devolving funding to schools to support pupils with SEN.
- 5.7 Of the children with statements, about half are in special schools. The number of Lewisham children placed in maintained special schools (5-15 population) is a significantly higher percentage than nationally and compared with some other London boroughs. This indicates a lack of range of provision so that parents have to choose either mainstream or special. A large number of pupils are placed in schools outside of the borough and, for those who attend daily, much time is wasted on travel. A significant number of children placed in special schools outside the borough have behaviour difficulties or autism. This reflects a lack of provision for these particular needs in the borough. Provision for children with behaviour difficulties has recently been expanded with the establishment of Key Stage 3 provision at New Woodlands School and the expansion of the outreach service from

that school. This is expected substantially to reduce the demand for out of borough places for children with behaviour difficulties.

- 5.8 Information provided to us by our colleagues at Lewisham Primary Care Trust shows a significant rise in the number of pupils diagnosed as being on the autistic spectrum. It is expected that this trend will continue so appropriate educational provision must be made for this type of need for the future within the borough.
- 5.9 In June 2007, Lewisham was inspected in a Joint Area Review. As part of this, inspectors considered the current provision for pupils with SEN. Feedback at the end of the inspection indicated that they were pleased to note that the LA had been reviewing specialist provision. They commented positively about the SEN Review and that it was timely that appropriate action is being taken to ensure adequate and appropriate provision to meet needs both now and in for future, and to reduce the high number of statements and children placed out of borough.

## **6. The Service**

- 6.1 The Local Authority (LA) currently has a range of settings and establishments to deliver education to children who have special educational needs. Most children with special educational needs have their needs met in mainstream schools. Those with a statement of special educational needs will have extra support in their mainstream school. Children who have higher level needs may require specialist provision. This can be in the form of a place at a special school which specialises in the type of the difficulty the child has or in a specialist unit or resource in a mainstream school.
- 6.2 Children may be educated in a specialist setting (an early years setting, school or unit/resource) or establishment maintained by the LA within the borough or may attend a similar setting or establishment maintained by a neighbouring borough. A small number of children with severe and complex needs attend highly specialist schools outside of the borough which may be run by independent or charitable organisations. Many of these schools provide residential education.
- 6.3 The current configuration of provision in Lewisham is as follows:

### **Special Schools**

New Woodlands School	Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulty (Primary and KS3 of Secondary)
Abbey Manor College	Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulty (KS4 of Secondary to age 16)
Meadowgate	Moderate Learning Difficulty and Autism (Primary)
Pendragon	Moderate Learning Difficulty and Autism (Secondary to age 16)
Brent Knoll	Mixed Learning Difficulty including Autism (Primary and Secondary to age 16)
Watergate	Severe and Profound Learning difficulty (Primary)

Greenvale Severe and Profound Learning difficulty  
(Secondary to age 19).

#### **Resource bases/Resource Bases**

Rushey Green Hearing Impairment – Oral/Aural (Primary)

Coopers Lane Hearing Impairment – Total Communication  
(Primary)

Sedgehill Hearing Impairment – Oral/Aural and to develop Total  
Communication

Kilmorie Learning Difficulty and Disability (LDD)  
(Primary)

Catford High Learning Difficulty and Disability  
(Secondary to age 16)

Deptford Green Specific Learning Difficulty - dyslexia  
(Secondary to age 16)

Sydenham Visual Impairment  
(Secondary to age 16).

## **7. Assessment of Need**

- 7.1 The population of children with SEN can be divided into two groups, children with high incidence/low level need and those with low incidence/high level need. Lewisham currently attaches resources to a child's statement of SEN using a matrix system, which is on a scale 3-8. The matrix is based on an assessment of the child's needs and the level of support required to enable the child to access education. Since April 2007 additional funding has been provided to schools to support children with lower level needs (matrix 3-5) so the headteacher can provide support without going through the lengthy assessment process. This applies only to children who have not already been issued with statements. As a consequence, from 2007-08 it is intended that a statement will only be provided for children with higher level need. This approach will align Lewisham with other local authorities.
- 7.2 The assessment of need in this section has been based upon 2005/06 pupil numbers and projects demand up to 2015/16. Two sets of projections have been calculated – Higher Level and Lower Level. The former assumes that all pupils currently in special schools are pupils with needs at matrix 6-8. We have also factored into this calculation projections from Health, particularly the estimate that 1.2-1.5% of the general population will have ASD. However, it is clear from a review of a sample that a proportion of pupils now in special school were recorded prior to joining those schools as having needs at matrix 3-5 (lower level need), and the majority of professionals agree that, in future, pupils like these should be adequately supported in mainstream. The forecast of Lewisham Resident pupils with statements is attached (Appendix 1).

### **Identification of Places Needed**

- 7.3 The 2015-16 figures are used for the long term identification of places needed, considering pupils with high level needs. Additional estimates of numbers of places

for the years from now until 2015 will be used to ensure that provision continues to be made at the right level for existing pupils, including all those currently in special provision. There is a particularly high number of pupils with SLD in Year 4 in 2006-07 which has carried through in the tables to a high number in Year 13 in 2015-16. Despite this, we expect to see a gradual decline in the number of pupils with SLD, to a 'core' number. From this analysis it is clear that the area of greatest demand is places for children with ASD.

- 7.4 The tables below provide a comparison of the projections with the present numbers. It is estimated that there will be an additional 37 places required in the primary phase and 26 places in secondary (11-19) by 2015 (the latter reducing by about 12 when the high SLD cohort has moved through). The figures have made allowances for a predicted increase in the number of pupils entering Lewisham schools over the decade.

#### Number of pupils in 2006-07 with high level needs

Primary Need	3-11	11-16	16-19	Total
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	87	65	8	160
Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties	26	86	7	119
Hearing Impairment	5	20	1	26
Moderate Learning Difficulties	28	136	18	182
Multi-Sensory Impairment	1	0	0	1
Physical Disabilities	23	20	4	47
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	13	14	6	33
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	41	39	4	84
Severe Learning Difficulties	79	65	25	169
Specific Learning Difficulties	4	14	1	19
Visual Impairment	9	5	2	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>464</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>856</b>

#### 2015-16 projections of pupils with high level needs

Primary Need	3-11	11-16	16-19	Total
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	149	140	27	316
Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties	20	57	21	98
Hearing Impairment	10	21	3	35
Moderate Learning Difficulties	26	38	12	76
Multi-Sensory Impairment	0	1	0	1
Physical Disabilities	30	26	5	61
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	21	8	5	34
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	23	40	10	73
Severe Learning Difficulties	61	61	58	180
Specific Learning Difficulties	4	15	7	26
Visual Impairment	9	9	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>919</b>

## 8. Principles

8.1 A well established set of principles has underpinned Lewisham's approach to SEN, these are:

- Every child who can be should be educated in a mainstream school;
- Support, training and resources should be provided to ensure that mainstream schools are confident and able to provide children with special needs with a high quality education;
- All special schools have an outreach function, to support and help to develop what mainstream schools offer;
- Children in special schools should have some opportunity, according to their needs, to learn alongside those in mainstream schools;
- Children and young people should be educated locally wherever possible;
- There needs to be a strong partnership between the Authority and parents; this requires good services and information;
- Resources from out-borough placements should be re-directed into mainstream schools;
- Early recognition of a child's needs and early intervention are vital. We will ensure funding is available at an earlier stage, not just through a statement;
- An efficient service for statutory assessment should be maintained for those children who still need it.

## 9. Consultation

Consultation Structure: Documents and Activities

9.1 Place Group, an education consultancy, was employed to run the consultation on behalf of the LA and to report the outcomes. Their report is attached in Appendix 2. Place ran nearly thirty focus groups of various interests, who were:

- Learners from each of the special schools mentioned in the proposals
- Learners with and without disabilities attending mainstream schools
- Lewisham learners at special schools outside the borough
- Staff from each of the special schools affected
- Staff from mainstream schools with potential specialist resource bases
- Professionals including teaching and support staff
- Parents using services provided particularly for children and young people with special educational needs
- Trade union representatives.

9.2 The purpose of the groups was not merely to discover the extent of agreement with consultation proposals but also to explore why there was agreement or not and to hear respondents' further ideas. In order to support discussion with the groups of young people with special educational needs, an "easy-read" version of the consultation document was produced for use by the adult leading the group.

9.3 There was also a consultation event for the public and another for professionals which was attended by staff from schools and the health service. The public event was visited by approximately 70 people but only 43 completed the attendance record, some of whom also participated in other group consultation activities, and the professionals' event by 55 people. Each was led by Place Group with a number of officers in attendance for discussion and to respond to questions.

9.4 Despite some people expressing concern that the summary document and questionnaire was written by officers to gain only the answers desired, Place Group

confirmed that respondents took the opportunity to write extensively about the proposals. Many wrote at some length about the broad issues, while ignoring the detail of specific questions, which made analysis more difficult than expected. However, the analysis was thorough, with particular care taken to check for consistency between the “yes/no” element of a response and the text which followed. A number of respondents appeared inconsistent, which reinforced the view that simply counting those who stated they are for or against a proposal does not necessarily give an accurate picture of respondents’ views.

- 9.5 The consultation allowed three different methods of response; a full consultation mixing qualitative and quantitative data, a shorter leaflet version of the full consultation, also containing qualitative and quantitative data, and letters addressed to the council. Overall the response to the consultation was relatively low. Only 186 responses were received of which 120 were full consultations, 62 leaflets and 4 letters. With these 186 responses, 95 stated that they had children currently attending school in Lewisham and 46 stated their child had a statement. It is estimated that 1 in 5 UK school children will have a special need at some time in their school career. In Lewisham this translates to approximately 6800 of the 33,947 school population (Warnock Report 1978). Therefore the total consultation response only accounts for the parents of 3% of the actual population of children with special educational needs.

### **The Consultation Process**

- 9.6 The full consultation paper was based closely on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007 Report to Mayor and Cabinet, with some effort to address concerns raised in the informal consultation. This is attached as Appendix 3. This was the main document used for discussion. Copies were sent to the parents/carers of all Lewisham resident pupils with statements of special educational need, to Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of each Lewisham school, to all statutory consultees and a number of other organisations. A second, shorter version of the consultation paper was prepared and distributed through schools to parents of all children in mainstream provision. This version was also made available to the public through libraries and other information centres in Lewisham. Each document included a questionnaire for return by Freepost. Both versions were available to the public on the Lewisham council website and a facility was provided for responding on-line, as well as an email address to which questions could be addressed

## **10. Feedback on Current SEN Provision and the Underlying Principles**

### **Current Provision**

- 10.1 As a prelude to seeking stakeholder views on the proposals to Strengthen Specialist Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs they were also asked to comment on the current arrangements and the underlying principles.
- 10.2 42% of respondents did not express a view on this. Of those that did one in four were satisfied with current provision and three out of four were not. During the focus group discussions the consultants were able to explore and identify issues of dissatisfaction more clearly. Many of the concerns they raised are addressed within the proposals and will be dealt with later in the report. These were:
- The need for increased training and expertise within mainstream schools
  - Greater understanding of children’s needs throughout the mainstream schools
  - Greater availability of multi-agency input and in particular health and therapist services



- The need for more places for children with SEN and in particular for children with ASD
  - There should be greater strategic planning and communication between professionals
  - There should be more flexibility in services and higher levels of resources for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties
  - The requirement for properly designed facilities and premises that are accessible to students with SEN
  - Organisational changes are needed including changes to class size, policies and procedures to enable one to one support and create an inclusive culture to enable learners to be taught appropriately
- 10.3 There are two important issues that arose that fall outside of the proposals but do need to be addressed. The other issues are dealt with later in the report. These concerns can be broadly grouped together as follows:
- Dissatisfaction with the LA's management of the statutory SEN process, the use of statements and reducing reliance upon them
  - A desire for greater recognition of parental expertise and engagement with them. Higher levels and greater consistency of support to them including information and advice.

## **Commentary**

### **Statutory Assessment and Reduction in Statements**

- 10.4 Parents were unhappy about the length of time it took to get a statement and felt that it was the sole route for them to receive the support and services they needed. The statutory assessment process is a legal procedure with prescribed deadlines. It is bureaucratic and involves a considerable amount of time spent by professionals in assessing a child and writing reports. The timescale prescribed in the Education Act 1996 is six months (26 weeks) from the request for a statutory assessment to the issue of a final statement. However, there can be delays if reports from professionals are not received on time. Lewisham's performance in statutory assessment improved in 2006/7 and 98% of statutory assessments excluding valid exceptions, were completed within the 18 week timescale given from a decision to assess is agreed. Performance where valid exceptions were included showed 63% completed within the 18 weeks.
- 10.5 Some respondents suggested that an external agency should be responsible for carrying out the statutory assessment. However, the current arrangements for SEN are a matter of national policy and statute. Alternative proposals are outside the scope of this review.
- 10.6 Lewisham has taken steps to minimise the bureaucratic processes involved in the statutory assessment process. This is in line with Government's recommendations set out in 'Removing Barriers to Achievement'. Nearly all local authorities have now adopted similar approaches. In Lewisham, funding that was previously allocated through statements for children with lower level needs has now been made available directly to schools. This enables them to fund additional support without the need for a statement. This means that a child can get help quickly without needing to wait for the outcome of the lengthy assessment. Monitoring is through a variety of means including financial reports from schools, school improvement officer intervention, school inspection reports, school governors and individual education plans or provision management plans.

## Parental Engagement

- 10.7 Improving outcomes for all children especially those with SEN is dependent upon a strong and secure partnership with parents. It is recognised that there have been tensions around assessment and placement of children. Placement of a child with a statement of special educational need is decided by Lewisham through its Special Educational Needs Panel. Places in special schools must be reserved for those children who have high level needs which cannot be met in a mainstream school. The decision making process by the SEN Panel is seen to be robust, as evidenced through the recent Joint Area Review inspection. However, this procedure may be seen by some parents as cumbersome and time consuming. Officers are required to follow this procedure to ensure consistency of approach. Every effort is made by officers to provide advice and information to parents in a sensitive and neutral way. Advice to parents about the statutory assessment process is also available through our Parent Partnership Service which is delivered through Lewisham Pre-School Learning Alliance and is independent of the Council.
- 10.8 It might be possible to address this concern by extending the Parent Partnership Service to strengthen the partnership and to facilitate greater engagement with parents. This is put forward for the Mayor to consider later in the report. Under this proposal, the Parent Partnership Service would extend its range and provide a more flexible service to parents. This could be achieved by creating a tiered service providing information and support and more targeted support for parents during the statutory assessment process. The service could cover children of all ages and enable development of expertise to support parents with transition planning, including working with the Connexions service. In the consultation some parents suggested forming a Reference Group to work with officers. This might be facilitated by the Parent Partnership Service.

## Principles

- 10.9 38% expressed no views on the principles. Of those that did respond a little over half did not agree with Lewisham's principles. A higher number of parents from the primary sector than those from the secondary sector agree with the principles. A higher proportion of staff from mainstream schools agree with the principles than those from special schools. A higher proportion of parents with children with SEN in mainstream schools agreed with the principles than those with children at special schools.
- 10.10 Two principles appear to have generated the most debate and contention:
- \* Every child who can be should be educated in a mainstream school
  - \* An efficient service for statutory assessment should be maintained for those children who still need it
- 10.11 The second of these principles stimulated discussion about the statutory assessment process and the use of statements which has been addressed earlier in the report.
- 10.12 There were diverse views on the first principle. Some parents had strong views that although their children could attend a mainstream school it is not necessarily where they would want them to be, Some parents with children at mainstream school expressed very strong views that this was the right option for them. A very small number of written respondents stated a very clear dissatisfaction with provision at special schools. The Green Party stated that although they believe that it is a human right for a child to be educated in an all ability setting, the proposals do not set out the assessment criteria.

- 10.13 There was less disagreement about the other principles although often they were qualified by conditions that should be in place:
- an improved level of resourcing in mainstream
  - greater staff training
  - no reduction in the number of special school places (though it is not always clear whether respondents are referring only to places physically located in special schools or whether specialist places in resource bases are included)
  - improved staffing ratios.
- 10.14 Learners attending special schools expressed a high level of satisfaction about the services they receive. Learners from Brent Knoll and those young people with and without SEN in mainstream schools are strong advocates of attending mainstream schools. For them this means that they can be socially included, both now and in later life. They recognise parents' anxieties but wish to be "as employed and visible as everyone else". They wish their schools to be a truer cross-section of society and point out benefits, to both group of non-disabled learners and those with disabilities learning together. There is a feeling that if the process begins early enough it is possible for cultures to change.

## **Commentary**

'Every child who can be should be educated in a mainstream school.'

- 10.15 In relation to this principle, it was clearly stated in the review that for it to be practicable there has to be confidence in the level of training, the availability of resources, and in the support mechanisms being put in place in mainstream; that the culture and organisation of mainstream schools needs to change considerably if it is to be inclusive; and that special schools will remain the right place for some children irrespective of the quality of provision made in mainstream. It is accepted that a change management programme is needed to achieve this.
- 10.16 Much of the SEN debate locally and nationally has focused on the issue of where children are taught. Lewisham's vision for its special schools is that they should meet the needs of children with more complex needs. In order to achieve this places will need to be reserved for children with complex needs and not be taken by those with lower level need. If this does not happen the most vulnerable members of our community will need to be educated outside of the borough. The proposals improve provision for children with lower level need in mainstream schools. It is now the expectation that children placed in special schools will spend some of their time in mainstream schools and if appropriate some will progress to dual or full time placement. A key element of the SEN strategy is to ensure that mainstream schools have access to sufficient specialist support to ensure that children with lower level SEN make progress against outcomes. The majority of young people thought that access to mainstream was important for them socially and helped them prepare for a role in wider society.
- 10.17 These principles have underpinned Lewisham's approach to SEN for many years. Setting high expectations for children is important and our principles reflect this. For these reasons it is not recommended to change the principles.

## 11. Views on the Proposals

- 11.1 The shorter of the two consultation documents asked three yes/no questions, as follows, with an opportunity to give supporting reasons for each answer.
- Do you agree that we should be improving what mainstream schools can offer children with special educational needs? This includes increasing the support given to them by special schools.
  - Do you agree that we should set up specialist resource bases in some mainstream schools?
  - Do you agree with the proposals to change some special schools to provide more places for children with autism and other complex needs?
- 11.2 The response form to the full version included substantially the same questions, but with specific opportunities to comment on one or more elements of the detail offered against each proposal. In this report each of the three proposals is discussed separately, although there is clearly some interdependence. The full version also included discussion of, and the opportunity to respond to, alternatives for the management of the Hospital Outreach and Education Service.

### Outcomes of the Consultation on the Proposals

- 11.3 In each of the following sections there is a summary of the consultation responses, followed by an officer commentary.

#### **Do you agree that we should be improving what mainstream schools can offer children with special educational needs? This includes increasing the support given to them by special schools.**

##### **Responses**

- 11.4 The majority, about 75%, of those who responded in writing were positive that this should happen, but did not treat this proposal in isolation. Many were wary that improving the capacity of mainstream schools could be to the detriment of other parts of the service, especially the special schools, and emphasised that we should ensure this does not happen. Respondents commented on the current difficulties in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN in mainstream provision, notwithstanding that for many pupils this is managed well. In writing and in focus groups participants spoke of their perceptions of:
- **limited resources** available and the strain put on staff;
  - **limited training** of mainstream staff to work with pupils with special educational needs;
  - **performance criteria** for mainstream schools which may cause them to focus key activity on children who will make a significant difference to achieving those criteria and not those whose national curriculum levels are lower;
  - **managing the behaviour of** some pupils with SEN in large classes and social areas whatever the level of support.
- 11.5 There were a number of positive views expressed about the current outreach services, but a number of respondents commented that outreach services are not a substitute for special school teaching, and they were wary that a positive response to this question might have a consequent impact on the availability of special school places. Some of the staff participating linked the opportunity to improve outreach

services with the personalised approach to learning promoted by the Every Child Matters agenda. It was pointed out by the special schools particularly that there is a cost to providing outreach and that currently at times they feel inadequately financed to meet the needs.

- 11.6 A number of respondents drew attention to issues linked to poor behaviour of some pupils. They state that the management of behaviour is not adequately addressed either through the current provision or through the proposed arrangements. It was suggested that a significant percentage of children with behaviour difficulties do not have any diagnosis and that the resource allocation to manage behaviour in ordinary mainstream classes is consequently inadequate.
- 11.7 A small number of participants suggested that investing in mainstream schools was a waste of money and that it would be better spent on special schools.

### **Commentary**

- 11.8 The intention is to maintain and improve the potential outcomes for young people currently in the school system and to enhance the attainment, participation and employability of the following generation. While there was much criticism of practice in mainstream schools the evidence of Ofsted inspections does not support the view as practice is reported to be at least satisfactory and often good in Lewisham Schools.

### **Resources**

- 11.9 Lewisham's expenditure on SEN is above the national average. The adapted financial arrangements put in place from April 2007 have been an opportunity for schools to reconsider their budgets and will be increasingly so as delegated finance changes over the next few years. The proposals taken together envisage a realignment of finance, making savings in the long-term on placement out of the borough, some of which will be recycled into mainstream school budgets. This will increase the flexibility of schools to develop provision which addresses the needs of pupils with SEN. It is agreed that the local authority should further develop its monitoring procedures and support schools to improve their own reviews so that it is demonstrable that schools are not under-using the finance intended for pupils with SEN. It is proposed that the outcomes of monitoring will be reported regularly to Schools Forum.

### **Training**

- 11.10 It is agreed that to take forward the ambitious agenda set out in Strengthening Specialist Provision for children with SEN, that there is a need to:
- develop staff with advanced skills in SEN
  - develop new mixed skills teams that can provide outreach support
  - build on the National Strategies that support all schools to have inclusive practice.
- 11.11 Following the strong views expressed during consultation we have reviewed our Training Strategy to strengthen our approach. In order to build up the specialist expertise across the collaboratives of schools including mainstream schools developing resource bases, we will work with higher education institutions and other providers to support the development of training and specialist qualifications for those working within the mainstream or specialist sector. Schools developing resource bases will have specialist SEN staff this will be achieved through training or recruitment. We will work with schools to identify the most helpful approach to strengthening provision. An audit tool will be provided to schools so that they can identify SEN training needs. The outcomes of audit will inform school and LA

training plans. Approaches to training could include a list of preferred providers for particular needs, subsidised training and an agreed protocol requiring specified post-holders to attend specialist training. A menu of training will include:

- \* Specialist ASD training
- \* Speech and communication
- \* Literacy and numeracy
- \* Behaviour management

Developing the strategic role of SENCOs to play a fuller part in policy development and school improvement is a priority. Learning Support Assistants and Learning Mentors have a key role in supporting children with SEN and the development of these staff will also be a priority.

- 11.12 Building on the success of the out-reach services developed from New Woodlands school we will support the development of similar services from all special schools. We will support schools to develop multi-agency teams so that they can support children across all the ECM outcomes and give advice to their families. The Workforce Strategy will support the development of these teams. The strategy will also impact upon the LA's central team and we will comply with the new generic minimum standards set for support services.
- 11.13 The National Strategies support all schools developing ambitious targets and having high expectations for children with SEN. The LA will support schools to identify what good progress is for pupils with SEN and ensure that the school target setting for SEN is personalised and ambitious.

### **Performance of schools**

- 11.14 It is frequently stated that finding ways to improve the outcomes for pupils with SEN will lead to a school having a wider range of strategies for working with all pupils. There is evidence that supports this view. Nationally, descriptions such as "assessment for learning" and "personalised learning" are used for methods which support this, and they are promoted in the national strategy for education. Local authority staff will continue to work with schools to implement improvement in teaching and learning, with a particular focus on the effect on pupils with SEN. It is agreed that we should consider incentivising schools to want to take children with SEN, perhaps through publicising outcomes separately to show schools' performance in this area.

### **Managing Behaviour**

- 11.15 Officers recognise that insufficient emphasis may have been put into the consultation paper on working with pupils whose behaviour disrupts normal classroom activity. This was because there has been successful development in this area in primary provision, and the opening of New Woodlands Key Stage 3 classes and the enhancement of secondary outreach provision are already in hand. There has been good evidence of the effect of the specialist teacher team and other strategies at primary level, and it is expected that there will be a significant change at secondary level from Autumn 2007. The impact of this change will be monitored. Regarding resources for such children in mainstream schools, the finance made available to schools (apart from that attached to statements) is related to a number of factors, some of which may be statistically related to behaviour. It is not directly linked to individual pupils whose behaviour may be challenging, so each school therefore allocates resources to classes as is seen fit.

**Do you agree that we should set up specialist resource bases in some mainstream schools?**

## Responses

- 11.16 In each category of respondents to the written consultation, there was a majority response in favour of the introduction of resource bases. This included about 80% of the parents or primary children, 70% of secondary and over 80% of the staff replying. A number of participants in focus groups welcomed the opportunity for clarification of how they might work, and of how such bases run in other authorities.
- 11.17 Several key themes emerged in reasons for supporting this proposal:
- The bases will help more children with learning difficulties
  - The schools need specialist resources to teach children effectively
  - The bases will support those children with SEN already absorbed within the mainstream roll
  - The bases will provide a good transition point between mainstream and special schools and vice versa
- 11.18 However, a large number of respondents agreeing with this proposal also expressed reservations or stated conditions necessary for their implementation. The trade unions were opposed to the introduction of resource bases. Different concerns were expressed by different respondents. They included:
- **There must be sufficient resources**, including trained and skilled staff if they are to work for children
  - **The bases should be complementary** to special school places but not replace them
  - **Parental preference** – parents and professionals should have a strong voice and choice in where children are placed
  - **The number of resource** base places must be sufficient for those who need them
  - **Concerns about bullying** – and potential isolation of children in resource bases
  - **Funding** arrangements must be clear
- 11.19 Of the proposals put forward for initiating specialist resource bases there was little overall difference in the level of their acceptance between one school and another. Secondary school staff were a little more cautious in relation to what they might be expected to do when pupils from the resource base are in mainstream classrooms, but all welcomed the idea that there would be specialist staff appointed to the bases who would be able to give guidance. It was also considered beneficial that these staff might bring expertise which could be used more widely in the school.
- 11.20 A number of respondents including the NUT and Brent Knoll parents, strongly opposed to the potential loss of the primary provision at Brent Knoll, were guarded in their acceptance of primary resource bases, recognising the connection between the two proposals. The proposal to cease a primary provision at Brent Knoll school is not supported by parents at the school. Some respondents suspected that the provision of resource bases would lead to children being inappropriately taught in mainstream classes of unwilling teachers. There was concern expressed that funding would not be sufficient and the implementation would take place against the wishes of Headteachers.

## Commentary

## **Bases should be Complementary**

- 11.21 It is agreed that the bases should be complementary to special school places. In line with the Every Child Matters and the national strategy for SEN, schools are expected to work collaboratively and where possible in Federations to meet the needs of children with SEN. Strong networks of schools sharing responsibility for children in their area have enormous potential to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Mainstream and special schools working together can open up new pathways for children with SEN. For example, a child may spend some of their time in a special school and progress to a resource base in a mainstream school. The proposals break down the divide between mainstream and special schools to create a unified system where more children can be included within a wider community of schools.
- 11.22 The proposals will maintain primary special school placements at Watergate, New Woodlands and the new ASD school and an additional 80 places across five primary schools. On the basis of the evidence it is considered that this will be a sufficient and well balanced range of provision. It would provide a continuum of provision that is lacking in the current situation. It is envisaged that the new arrangements will see more children moving between schools through dual placements or transition to mainstream. Children currently placed at Brent Knoll will remain there as long as the provision is appropriate to their needs and parental wishes. As there will be new provision across the Borough more local provision can be made. The proposals aim to break down the divide between mainstream and special schools to create a unified system where more children can be included within a wider community of schools.

## **Parental Preference**

- 11.23 The legislation on SEN and the Code of Practice ensures that parents express a preference for a maintained school they wish their child to attend. Local authorities must comply with a parental preference unless the school is unsuitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude or SEN or that the placement is incompatible with the efficient use of resources. These proposals do not change in any way parents' rights. Professionals will be asked for their views on the child's needs during the statutory assessment process.

## **Bullying**

- 11.24 There were concerns in both mainstream and special schools about bullying. The Restorative Justice (RJ) approach is an effective means of combating bullying in schools. In Lewisham we have schools now with national and international reputations for RJ practice and their expertise will be used to support other schools. Additional resources have been allocated to RJ in the 2007-08 financial year.

## **Funding**

- 11.25 Financial resourcing of the resource bases will treat them as special schools, so that they will receive funding based on the number of places being made available rather than the number of places occupied. This system ensures that the school has a stability of resources to plan appropriately and make provision for the needs of their children. The level of resource will enable schools to ensure the safety of children and to make the appropriate support is available to encourage access to all aspects of the wider school curriculum. The allocation of resources for the bases will be clearly identified within the schools' budgets. We will specify the requirements which they are funding and will monitor against those.



## **Specific Proposals**

### **Primary Resource Bases at John Ball, Tidemill, Perrymount and Forster Park**

11.26 There was a general view that primary school resource bases would be successful. The four schools wishing to develop resource bases were positive and saw this initiative within the strategic development of their schools. Parents and professionals were particularly positive about Perrymount which already has children with very complex needs. Several respondents thought that all schools should have a resource base. The proposed phasing out of Brent Knoll affected the views of many respondents. Two thirds of staff who raised concerns were from two schools, Myatt Gardens and Lucas Vale. There was a general level of enthusiasm amongst parents of younger children about the opportunity for their child to be supported in a mainstream environment.

### **Secondary Resource Bases – Catford High, Addey & Stanhope**

11.27 There has been a small specialist resource at Catford High for one year. The school is positive about the development. They are keen that they are involved in the decision making about children being placed at the provision.

11.28 Addey & Stanhope are very supportive and enthusiastic about the development of a resource base. There were some concerns that it would not be physically possible to locate a base at the school. The school has reviewed its accommodation requirements so that the base can be included. They are about to appoint a speech and language therapist.

## **Commentary**

11.29 Work will continue to support the schools in developing this provision. The schools have already been working together to plan training and they have researched best practice nationally.

## **Do you agree with the proposals to change some special schools to provide more places for children with autism and other complex needs?**

### **Responses**

11.30 A significantly higher proportion of stakeholders are in favour of these proposals than those who are not. About 3 in 4 respondents to the written responses are in favour of making the proposed changes, focused especially on the opening of a specialist school for children and young people with autism. In general these have been from people with no direct stake in Brent Knoll or Pendragon. There is a widely agreed recognition that further provision is needed for children with ASD.

11.31 Responses to these proposals have shown a high level of concern about any changes from stakeholders directly involved with Pendragon (parents, staff, students and governors), and also from parents with children at Brent Knoll. Other stakeholders linked to Brent Knoll have voiced concerns but students especially have considered positively some of the proposed change. Staff, governors and parents currently linked to Meadowgate have been divided in their responses. The key issues arising from the consultation are:

- Management of change, particularly the proposed new school and closure of Meadowgate and Pendragon schools: “Why change schools that are performing well?” and there was a view “Why fix something that is not broken?” During the consultation period new draft guidance was published

by DCSF introducing the concept of a fair test for the re-organisation of special schools. Respondents were keen to know how the proposals matched this test.

- The PCT and CAHMS were concerned to continue to work with us recognising that children with complex needs and ASD are very different group and need to be considered separately within the proposals.
- Finding a suitable site for the proposed new school and the ability to maintain a separation of primary and secondary sections. There was concern that the Pendragon site would be too small for a 120 place school and that there would be insufficient outdoor play space.

## **Commentary**

### **Management of Change**

- 11.32 These proposals are based upon an analysis of need and future projections for special needs places. It is not because there is any concern about the quality of provision and standards within our special schools. There have been concerns that too many children with lower level needs are placed in special schools with the consequent effect that children with more complex needs are placed outside of the Borough and it is agreed that the special schools provide good quality services and standards are high. (The current arrangements do not sufficiently meet the needs of all Lewisham children). There is an increasing need and demand for ASD places.
- 11.33 Several respondents suggested that the current provision should be maintained and an additional special school for children with ASD be provided. This model would require the Local Authority to continue to place children with lower level need in special schools. An additional special school will increase expenditure on SEN which is already high: under these circumstances it would be very difficult to ensure value for money. It would also increase the number of children in special schools when Lewisham consistently has a higher percentage of children placed in maintained special schools compared to the national average. In 2005 England had 1.19% of the 5-15 population in special schools compared to 1.72% in Lewisham. It is accepted, however, that change for children and parents currently at those schools is difficult and re-affirms the commitment to an incremental change progress. This will ensure that children will remain at their current school if it is their parents' preference and it meets their needs.
- 11.34 The SEN strategy requires a complex programme of projects to be delivered on time and within budget. Additional programme management costs have been factored into the cost plan. The council's systems for programme management will support implementation of the strategy.

### **SEN Improvement Test**

- 11.35 Several respondents cited the draft guidance published by DCSF attributed to Lord Adonis in the consultation and the need to adhere to its principles. The draft guidance introduces the concept of the Statutory SEN Improvement Test. The test is that when proposing the re-organisation of SEN provision the LA needs to demonstrate to parents, the local community and decision makers that the proposed alternative arrangements are likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and range of SEN provision. The draft proposals sets out the following key factors to be taken into account:

- Identify the details of the specific benefits that will flow from the proposals in terms of:
  - Improved access to education and associated services including the curriculum, facilities and equipment, with reference to the LA's Accessibility Strategy
  - Improved access to specialist staff, both education and other professionals, including any external support and outreach services
  - Improved access to suitable accommodation
  - Improved supply of suitable places
- Arrangements for the alternative provision for displaced pupils if a school is to be closed.
- Transport arrangements that support access and the LA's policy for SEN and disabled children
- Specification of the funding of the proposals and the planned staffing arrangements that will be put into place.

- 11.36 Although the guidance is draft and was published after Lewisham began its review of SEN the LA's proposals do meet the new SEN Test. The proposals provide improved supply of places particularly for children with ASD. The report of 10<sup>th</sup> January identified the high number of children with statements (390) who are currently placed in schools out of the borough with 90 of those children in non-maintained special schools or independent schools. It is not in the best interests of children that so many are placed outside their home communities. These proposals will ensure that more children are educated in Lewisham. The development of a continuum of provision will ensure greater flexibility of provision that can better meet children's changing needs. BSF funding will provide better physical environments that can transform children's learning. The proposals include outreach services from all the special schools and specialist resources, increased access to therapy and respite services. The proposals meet the requirements for better access to education, supply of places and other services.
- 11.37 The proposals will not result in the displacement of children. Although technically both Pendragon and Meadowgate will close in order to form the proposed new ASD school, children will not be displaced. Similarly the re-designation of Brent Knoll to be a 11-19 school will not result in displacing children. We are proposing an incremental approach that will mean children can stay in their current placement as long as it is meeting their needs and their parents wish them to stay there.
- 11.38 The LA's transport policy will be applied to the new proposals which should result in more children having their needs met closer to home. Every child attending a special school or a special resource base/unit will have their transport needs assessed and provision of transport will be dependent upon this.
- 11.39 The proposals are costed and include additional outreach, therapy and respite services. The staffing of special schools and the special resource bases will continue to be linked to national guidance contained in Circular 11/90.

### **Outreach Service for Children with ASD**

- 11.40 There was a general view that the current service supporting ASD children in schools is inadequate with some concerns about quality. It is accepted that the current service needs to be expanded and improved. This needs to be done quite

urgently and in advance of full implementation of proposals. The development of the new service will need to involve other partners particularly Health. The partnership will specify the requirements of the new service based on an analysis of need and views of stakeholders and will be commissioned jointly.

### **Placement of Children with Emotional Needs**

- 11.41 In response to concerns about children with emotional needs being placed with children with ASD we confirm that New Woodlands school will continue to provide for children with challenging behaviour. It is proposed that children who have emotional needs arising from trauma or mental health needs would be placed at Brent Knoll. This builds upon the work already undertaken by the school in meeting the needs of this group.

### **Specific Proposals to change Brent Knoll School**

#### **Response**

- 11.42 A large number of responses expressed praise for Brent Knoll school. Parents were particularly keen to see how a resource base would be an improvement above the special provision made at the school. The proposal to phase out the primary provision was opposed by parents of the school. Respondents were anxious about the proposed rate of change and would prefer that resource bases are successfully established before phasing out the primary provision. The staff of the school had anxieties about job security. There were very few responses to the proposal to make 16-19 provision at the school but those who did respond were in favour.

#### **Commentary**

- 11.43 Having considered the concerns expressed carefully it remains officers' recommendation that primary specialist provision at Brent Knoll should be phased out and replaced with specialist resource bases in mainstream school. Respondents asked why we could not have specialist resource bases and primary places at the school. We have looked again at projected need and with primary places at Watergate, the proposed new ASD school and New Woodlands, it is officers' advice that there is insufficient projected need for further places for children with complex needs, such that would require a special school place. There is a need for children with less complex need which can be catered for in specialist resource bases. The proposals will not result in the displacement of children. If the proposals are agreed staff and their professional associations will be consulted fully and the Local Authority will take the appropriate steps to ensure that the risks of redundancies are minimised. The proposals overall create an additional 27 primary specialist places and 58 secondary specialist places. Staff in all the schools involved will be given access to appropriate training and appropriate action will be taken to retain the services of skilled staff within Lewisham.

### **Specific Proposals for a New ASD School**

#### **Response**

- 11.44 Whilst there is a general consensus that a new special school for children with ASD is required there is less agreement about how to achieve this. The proposal to form the new school through the closure of Meadowgate and Pendragon receives very mixed views. Amongst those in favour of the proposal are a number of parents with

children at Meadowgate. This proposal is generally opposed by students, staff and parents at Pendragon. Health professionals and some mainstream schools expressed their support of the proposed all-through school. Children at Meadowgate expressed a desire to have their secondary school closer to them. There is a strong sense amongst learners at both Pendragon and Meadowgate that the services that they currently receive are those that they both want and need. Concerns about the suitability of the existing Pendragon site became a recurrent topic in the consultation with staff and parents.

### **Commentary**

- 11.45 The need for a new ASD school is generally accepted. In developing our proposals we have considered carefully the need to build upon good practice, ensure continuity in children's learning and the physical environment. Meadowgate already provides very specialist provision for children with complex needs including autism. Pendragon is just beginning to adapt its provision to match its feeder primary school. There have been problems in ensuring effective transition for children with complex ASD but collaborative working has been developing. The accommodation at both schools is no longer fit for the changing population of pupils. One school providing for children 5-19 will enable greater continuity across all key stages and minimise the effects of transition. Funding is available through BSF for an all-age special school. The options for the location of the proposed new ASD school are considered later in the report.

### **Watergate & Greenvale**

- 11.46 Very few comments were made on the proposed development of a federation between Greenvale and Watergate schools. Governors have agreed a "soft" federation of these two schools, which demonstrates commitment to a close working partnership, but maintains two separate governing bodies. The Executive Headteacher for the federation has been appointed, to further the joint working and to develop the key role of the schools in Lewisham's strategy for SEN. Although no specific reference was made to these schools in the consultation report it is recognised that in both schools a substantial number of pupils have autistic spectrum disorder alongside their cognitive difficulties.

### **Hospital Education and Outreach Service**

- 11.47 Comparatively few respondents expressed a view on the proposal for management of this service. Almost all those who did have some direct involvement as professionals, from either health or education services, and the one learner who provided a written response to the consultation was part of this service. The Management Board of Abbey Manor College were strongly in favour of incorporating this service with theirs, seeing a coherence in the type of provision which the two services make. This group suggests that creating a shared governance, and therefore financial structure, will enable the vocational offer already embedded at Abbey Manor and John Evelyn to be extended to the learners of the Hospital Service. Other respondents prefer the option of the Hospital provision (HEOS) working as an independent service, highlighting the GCSE route as one which is most suitable for many of their students. They consider the discordance between the mental health needs of a significant number of learners in the HEOS, which leads them to be cautious about their involvement with other young people, and the challenging behaviour of learners at Abbey Manor.

### **Commentary**

- 11.48 Lewisham's approach is to promote collaboration between schools including hard and soft federations. This approach enables resources to be used efficiently so that they better support outcomes for children. The establishment of a stand alone small unit would be inconsistent with this approach and would require additional funding for the management arrangements. There are benefits both in terms of service quality and best use of resources in having a shared governance and management arrangement with Abbey Manor College.
- 11.49 It is not proposed that the HEOS should be located on one of the existing Abbey Manor College sites, therefore, the risks of the two pupil population's needs being compromised are not significant.

### **Responses from the Trade Unions**

- 11.50 The Trade Unions that responded to the consultation including the NUT, ATL and Unison were opposed to the proposals. The NUT state that they support the principle of Inclusion but oppose these proposals because there were insufficient financial details and the need for more resources was paramount. Staff would need access to training and expert support. They cite the research of Cambridge University "Costs of Inclusion". All unions expressed concerns about the impact on staff and the need for training. A common issue was that the proposals lacked detail on arrangements to support children with Behavioural and Emotional Needs. At the request of some of the Trade Unions a separate focus group was set up and representatives took some time to explore the wider implications of the proposals and suggested conditions that would be needed to implement the proposals

### **Commentary**

- 11.51 It is accepted that the proposals are dependent upon a cost plan that supports increased levels of specialist teaching and non-teaching staff and access to appropriate training. Lewisham's funding for SEN is high. The proposals will enable the re-alignment of budgets to meet the costs of improved local services and the management of change programme. The detailed proposals on Behaviour Support were not included in the report as plans to increase provision at New Woodlands were well in hand. The KS3 provision which includes a comprehensive secondary outreach service opened in September 2007.

## **12. Resulting Proposals to Improve Provision for Children with SEN**

- 12.1 The following measures are recommended in order to increase the capacity of mainstream schools to meet children's SEN:
- a management of change programme that includes a training programme for teaching and non-teaching staff in mainstream schools
  - the development of specialist resource bases in mainstream primary and secondary schools include services for providing advice and support to other schools
  - that the special schools each offer outreach services developing their role in providing advice, training and support to mainstream schools and other services
  - that the special schools support children moving from special to mainstream where that is appropriate to their needs
  - that the LA expands its monitoring role for children with SEN and the use of resources delegated to support them, and that there will be regular reports to Schools Forum.

- 12.2 In response to concerns expressed by stakeholders the following areas are ones where changes might be considered to strengthen further our original proposals.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response</b>
Number of specialist places	It would be possible to increase specialist places further and the consultation responses indicate this would be welcomed. Holbeach primary school and Bonus Pastor secondary have been identified as possible locations.
Training	We have reviewed and strengthened the Training Strategy. Further consultation will be carried out with schools to ensure that the measures we propose are robust.
Support and advocacy for parents	It would be possible to increase the role of the Parent Partnership service so that the concerns identified in the consultation can be addressed.
Outreach services	We propose to bring forward the start date for the ASD Outreach team
Monitoring and reporting	The authority's systems for monitoring statements will be made stronger and more accountable
Phasing out of primary provision at Brent Knoll.	To consider delaying this until sufficient places are available in the primary resource bases.
Appropriateness of school site	Other site options have been explored

### **Issue 1: Increasing Specialist Places.**

- 12.3 The proposals in the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2007 report set out proposals for establishing new resource bases as follows:

- John Ball Primary School – 16 places for ASD
- Perrymount – 16 places for Complex medical and physical needs
- Tidemill – 16 places SLCN
- Forster Park – 16 places SLCN
- Addey and Stanhope – 25 places for SLCN
- Catford High – 35 places for LDD
- New Secondary School – 20 places LDD

- 12.4 In order to offer increased flexibility in response to the concerns that there may be insufficient specialist places available, the Mayor is asked to consider the development of additional resource bases as follows:

- Holbeach – 16 places ASD
- Bonus Pastor – 25 places SLCN

- 12.5 Appendix 5 shows how in each phase the overall requirement for additional places for pupils with high level needs will be met.

### **Issue 2: Training**

- 12.6 As set out earlier access to training was identified by many stakeholders as key to implementing the proposals. In response the SEN Training Plan has been reviewed and strengthened.

### **Issue 3: Support and Advocacy for Parents**

- 12.7 In recognition of the expressed concerns about the difficulty for parents in dealing with the bureaucratic SEN process, it is proposed that the Parent Partnership service should be expanded.

### **Issue 4: Outreach Services for Children with ASD**

- 12.8 The consultation highlighted the urgent need to improve services for children with ASD. In the long term it is proposed that this will be delivered through the special schools, with the lead taken in due course by the new ASD school. It is proposed that a new ASD Outreach service is developed in advance of the opening of the new school and that the LA works with the PCT in assessing the scope for jointly commissioning this.

### **Issue 5: Monitoring and Reporting**

- 12.9 The LA has systems for monitoring the quality of provision and progress of children with special educational needs. However, the consultation responses implied limited knowledge of these and suggested the need for a more public approach. There was some concern whether delegated and devolved funds would be used efficiently and solely to support the pupils for whom they are intended. It is agreed that accountability systems do need to be strengthened. This will be done and it is proposed that regular reports are provided to the Schools Forum and the Children and Young People's Strategic Board.

### **Issue 6: Primary places at Brent Knoll**

- 12.10 In response to concerns raised during the consultation The Mayor to consider whether primary provision at Brent Knoll should be phased out when sufficient places are available in primary resource bases

### **Issue 7: Accommodation Issues for Special School Provision**

- 12.11 The SEN Strategy in January 2007 proposed :
- The development of a single special school for children with ASD 4-19 years old. The proposal was for a school with 120 places;
  - Adaptations to Brent Knoll because of the requirement to take secondary children with more complex needs, and a reduction in places from 132 to 84.



12.12 The key drivers for the development of design options for Brent Knoll and new ASD school were:

- The provision of transformational facilities which will meet the educational and social needs of the pupils who will attend.
- The development of options to address any suitability, sufficiency and condition problems which exist in the current buildings.
- A desire for facilities which comply with best practice in building design and embrace the more generous space and specification standards of BB77 including sufficient outdoor play space.
- Centres of excellence for SEN teaching that embody at least the following characteristics: good internal and external aesthetics; flexible and adaptable accommodation; design appropriate for different types of SEN pupil, especially in respect to access and mobility; circulation that is clear and appropriate
- Sustainable developments that respond to current climate change concerns
- Minimising disruption for pupils during any rebuilding or remedial work.

12.13 In developing these options it was recognised that there were a number of constraints, principally:

- The available budget as at January 2007, based upon funding from the BSF programme;
- Potentially appropriate sites for development are restricted in the borough. Sites identified for exploration included the existing Brent Knoll, Pendragon, Meadowgate and Leahurst Road sites (the latter being the current decant site for Northbrook Secondary School).

12.14 The budget is insufficient to build two new schools at current prices and under current building regulations and requirements. The priority has been to ensure that new ASD places are established locally, in settings which appropriately reflect pupils' needs.

12.15 Taking all the factors into account, the Mayor is asked to consider the recommendation that the new ASD school should be established on the Pendragon site, and that Brent Knoll should be relocated to the Leahurst Road site.

12.16 Full details of the consideration of sites appear in Appendix 4.

## **13. Financial Implications**

### **Revenue Implications**

13.1 The paragraphs below quantify and give a brief description of the cost implications of the action proposed in the report. At the end of this section there is a table summarising the implications, showing that the proposed action will be self financing once fully implemented.

- There is a reduction in the places at Brent Knoll school to 84 with a change from mixed SEN provision to complex and enduring needs. The current formula funding is £12k per place. The resources for the new provision are

estimated to be funded at £16k per place. This would provide a net reduction in formula funding of £204k.

- The new Pendragon/Meadowgate school will provide 120 places rather than the 204 currently. The current provision at the schools is funded at £12,800 per place. The new provision is estimated to be funded at £16,900. This produces a net reduction in formula funding of £256k.
- The 80 additional primary resourced unit places supporting ASD and LDD places will require an additional formula funding of £1,120k. This assumes an average per place funding of £14k.
- The 105 additional secondary resourced unit places for LDD and SLCN places will require additional formula funding of £1,365k. This assumes an average per place funding of £13k.
- The review assumes an increase in 16-19 places of 33 which will attract £52k additional funding from the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) based upon the 07-08 rate of £1,583 per place.
- The change in the local provision in special schools, mainstream resource bases and mainstream schools will enhance the capacity to support children with SEN locally and reduce the dependency upon out of borough placements. An examination of the cohorts of pupils in the principal SEN need groups indicates that up to 20 pupils per annum would in future be accommodated in the local provision that currently would be placed out of borough. Over a five year period up to 85 pupils from a total of 327 currently out of borough would be supported locally. There would not be a 'bringing back' of pupils already placed out of borough but would be a reduction of such placements over time. This would lead to a reduction in expenditure of £2.5m which has been costed at the average out of borough placement cost of £29k. This would be used to finance the enhanced local provision. It should be noted that many placements cost over £45k per annum and so the estimate of cost saving is prudent assuming that the change in numbers is realised.
- Additional costs of enhancing therapy and respite care will be minimised by combining the resources of the Authority and the Primary Care Trust and commissioning the enhanced services. It is, however, estimated that there will be a cost of £125k over and above the current level of resources. Currently through increased SEN delegation school collaboratives are spending over £225k on speech and language therapy.
- The enhanced local provision and subsequent increase in pupil numbers will attract additional funding through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Over a five year period a reduction of 85 pupils placed out borough is expected. If this is fully realised then additional resources of £454k could be attained.
- The review assumes that outreach work will be essential to ensure that the new pattern provision realises its potential to enhance local capacity to support children with SEN. At this stage it is estimated this would require an equivalent resource to 6 additional full time staff with on costs and training amounting to £450k. The resource would be based in the Special Schools/Specialist Resource bases.

<u>Summary of financial implications</u>	Reduced costs (full year effect) £k	Proposed costs (full year effect) £k
Primary resource bases		1,120
Secondary resource bases		1,365
Outreach service and training		450
Therapy and health needs		325
Respite Care		125
Increase in Parent Partnership support		35
<b>Total additional expenditure</b>		<b>+3,420</b>
Out of borough placements	2,455	
Brent Knoll	204	
Pendragon	256	
<b>Total expenditure reductions</b>		<b>- 2,915</b>
Additional LSC funding	52	
Additional DSG funding	453	
<b>Total increase in grant</b>		<b>- 505</b>
<b>Net cost on full implementation</b>		<b>0</b>

13.2 It can be seen from the table above that, based on current costings, the action proposed in this report is self financing, once fully implemented. In the short term there will be an additional cost of managing change of £76k per annum for three years. This cost will be contained within existing budgets.

### **Capital Implications**

13.3 Financial implications for the capital programme are commercially sensitive and are therefore not included in this report.

## **14. Legal Implications**

14.1 The Human Rights Act 1998 safeguards the rights of children in the borough to educational provision which the local authority is empowered to provide in compliance with its duties under domestic legislation.

14.2 Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local authorities to secure that there are sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary school education and requires them in particular to have regard to the need to secure that special educational provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 requires local authorities to keep their arrangements for special educational needs provision under review.

14.3 Section 9 of the Education Act 1996 places a general duty on local authorities and funding authorities to have regard to the general principle that children are educated in accordance with their parents' wishes, so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient education and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.

- 14.4 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives local authorities the responsibility for determining school reorganisation proposals in the first instance. The Act provides that where there is concern about a local authority's decision the governing bodies and trustees of foundation special schools, and local strategic education partners (those previously represented on the School Organisation Committee), will be able to refer the proposals to the independent Schools Adjudicator who will consider them afresh.
- 14.5 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires local authorities to consider and respond to parental representations when carrying out their planning duty to make sure that there is sufficient primary and secondary provision and suitable SEN provision in their area.
- 14.6 Many children with special educational needs will also be disabled, and some disabled children, though they may not have special educational needs, may have particular access requirements. Local authorities are under a statutory duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to increase the accessibility of schools for disabled pupils and to prepare accessibility strategies showing how they plan to:
- Improve the physical school environment
  - Increase the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum
  - Improve the delivery to disabled pupils of information normally provided to non-disabled pupils in writing in different formats
- 14.7 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires local authorities and schools to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people (children, staff and members of the public using their services) and produce disability equality schemes showing how they will do this.
- 14.8 The local authority in conducting its review of special educational needs is required to conduct a disability equality impact assessment. Reference to such assessment appear at paragraph 15. In arriving at decisions in this regard the local authority is required to demonstrate that:
- a) the decision is based on objective criteria (justification);
  - b) the decision is a reasonable means of achieving a legitimate aim (justification) - this is relevant in the event that the decision is found to be a failure to make reasonable adjustments;
  - c) the views of disabled people have been taken into consideration and their participation and engagement have been encouraged (mere consultation is not enough);
  - d) once it has been established that the decision will significantly impact on disabled people, steps have been taken to minimise the impact. Such steps may include better partnering with the health and the voluntary sector, reallocating grants between directorates, publicity and information about the availability of alternatives (such as the availability of voluntary sector grants or external funding) etc.
- 14.9 Departmental guidance requires that when proposals are developed for reorganising or altering special educational needs provision local authorities and/or other proposers will need to show how they will improve standards, quality and/or range

of educational provision for children with special educational needs. Such factors are addressed at paragraphs 11.35 – 11.39 of the report.

- 14.10 When planning any changes to SEN provision, including closing special schools, opening new special schools, or adding, changing or removing SEN provision in mainstream or special schools, the local authority should consider whether statutory proposals are required. Where proposals are required proposers will need to follow the statutory process for new schools, school closures and for changes to SEN provision in mainstream schools as set out in the Decision Makers Guidance.
- 14.11 Current legislative provision for the establishment, discontinuance or alteration of schools is contained in sections 7, 15 and 18 of and Schedule 2 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Those sections stipulate that proposers shall before publishing statutory proposals consult such persons as seem appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 14.12 Should the Mayor decide to pursue any of the proposals with regard to the establishment, discontinuance or prescribed alteration of any school as set out in this report, statutory notices will need to be issued in accordance with detailed procedure laid down in Schedule 2 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and supplemented by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) (England) Regulations 2007 and the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2007.
- 14.13 Once statutory proposals are published there follows a 6 week statutory period during which representations can be made. Such representations must be sent to the local authority. Section 21 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides for regulations to set out who should decide proposals for any prescribed alterations. The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 make detailed provision for the consideration of prescribed alteration proposals. Most decisions will be taken by the local authority with some rights of appeal to the schools adjudicator.
- 14.14 If the local authority fails to decide proposals within 2 months of the end of the representation period the local authority must forward proposals, and any received representations (i.e. not withdrawn in writing), to the schools adjudicator for decision within one week of the end of the 2 month period.
- 14.15 In relation to school closure proposals most decisions will be taken by the local authority; however there is some right of appeal to the schools adjudicator. Where there are objections to the proposals, or there are no objections but the proposals are “related” to other proposals, the proposals will be decided as set out above.
- 14.16 In progressing proposals for the establishment of a new special school the local authority is ordinarily required to comply with the competition requirements prescribed in section 7 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006. The competition process does enable the local authority to publish proposals of its own for the establishment of a foundation special school or, where the local authority has a current APA rating of 4 on the day that the competition notice is published, publish proposals for a community special school without the consent of the Secretary of State. Alternatively a local authority may publish proposals for the establishment of a community special school with the consent of the Secretary of State, if on the day that the competition notice is published the authority has either a current APA rating of 3 or 2.
- 14.17 Decisions on school competition proposals are decided by the local authority except where the local authority is the proposer of a school or where there are proposals for a new foundation school where the local authority are a member of the foundation,

appoint a member of the foundation or a charity trustee or where the local authority exercises voting rights in the foundation or appoints anyone who can exercise voting rights. There is no right of appeal against a local authority's decision on school competition proposals.

- 14.18 In deciding whether to agree the recommendations, the Mayor must be satisfied that to do so is a reasonable exercise of his discretion on a consideration of all relevant matters and disregarding irrelevancies.

## **15. Equalities Implications**

- 15.1 The proposals seek to improve access to specialist provision for vulnerable groups, including secondary aged children with autism and with behaviour difficulties who currently have less access to appropriate local educational provision. Provision for secondary aged pupils with behaviour difficulties will be extended from September 2007.
- 15.2 The proposals seek also to increase opportunities for pupils with SEN to access mainstream provision. Nearly half of all pupils with a statement are in special schools. Only 3% are placed in resource bases or resourced provision in mainstream schools. Recent research indicates greater progress can be made by pupils with SEN if they have access to specialist teaching in a resourced unit in mainstream provision.
- 15.3 The proposals support the achievement of the LA's goals as set out in its Access Plan. They significantly improve access to the curriculum for children with disabilities. The refurbishment and rebuilding of schools support physical access to the curriculum.
- 15.4 In common with all aspects of education in Lewisham, close equalities monitoring is undertaken in relation to children with SEN. As proposals are developed following consultation, further equalities impact assessments will be carried out.

## **16. Crime and Disorder Implications**

- 16.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising out of this report.

## **17. Environmental Implications**

- 17.1 These proposals will enable provision to be made more locally for children with SEN. This would reduce the requirement for so many children to be transported to schools outside of their locality including placement outside of the Borough.
- 17.2 The proposal for a new special school and new resource bases in mainstream will be designed to meet environmentally sustainable standards. As a minimum all new school facilities will have a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of "excellent". Furthermore, in line with Planning Policy Statement 22, 10% of the annual carbon emissions resulting from the operation of the school buildings will be offset with renewable sources of energy installed on site such as wind, solar hot water collectors, photovoltaic and biomass.

## **18. Risk Analysis**

### **Primary Resource Bases**

- 18.1 There are four primary resource bases which will require capital. The School Access initiative would provide some of the funding for these projects but not the whole. The strategy assumes a reduction, overtime, in the proportion of children placed out of borough. If this is not delivered overall costs will rise and create pressure on the Directorate's budget.

### **Estates Strategy**

- 18.2 The strategy requires a complex programme of projects to be delivered on time and within budget. Although BSF resources have been identified each project will require detailed agreement with the BSF partner before work commences. The primary element of the programme includes projects where resources have still to be confirmed. All work is currently priced at 2007 prices; costs of inflation will require additional funding in due course.

### **Health Services**

- 18.3 These proposals are dependent upon health professional e.g. speech and language therapists being available to work across special and mainstream schools. The proposals will require an increase in the health workforce and the Local Authority will need to consider how these services will be provided. There is an agreement with the PCT to the joint commissioning of the new services. Recruitment to these specialist posts are a potential risk. We will work with colleagues in health to help manage this risk by looking at innovative ways of developing the provision and a recruitment strategy.

**Appendix 1 Forecast of Lewisham Resident Pupils with Statements per Age Group per Category of Need over the next 10 years**

Age Group	2006/07			2007/08			2008/09			2009/10			2010/11		
	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19
Primary Need															
ASD	143	77	10	150	86	10	149	99	12	149	109	15	150	120	16
BESD	67	178	15	53	171	22	38	154	29	27	135	35	21	121	31
HI	19	28	2	21	24	2	15	28	3	14	25	4	13	21	6
MLD	68	214	28	57	178	37	44	136	47	35	107	45	33	80	36
MSI	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
PD	30	28	5	27	35	3	26	34	3	26	34	5	27	32	6
PMLD	13	14	6	15	10	7	15	9	10	18	9	7	17	10	5
SLCN	96	95	11	76	106	10	55	117	10	45	115	12	42	96	17
SLD	87	71	27	83	75	32	77	80	37	63	90	40	63	89	42
SPLD	42	145	11	29	120	17	20	94	22	13	70	23	10	52	20
VI	12	6	2	11	9	0	11	9	0	13	8	1	10	9	2
Age Group Totals	578	856	117	523	814	140	451	760	173	404	702	187	387	630	181
Year Totals	1551			1477			1384			1293			1198		

Age Group	2011/12			2012/13			2013/14			2014/15			2015/16		
	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19
Primary Need															
ASD	148	127	19	145	139	21	144	140	24	147	139	28	149	140	27
BESD	20	100	30	19	87	28	19	73	26	20	62	25	20	57	21
HI	11	19	6	11	20	3	10	16	4	10	15	6	10	13	3
MLD	32	66	26	28	59	19	26	48	18	26	41	17	26	38	12
MSI	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
PD	28	29	7	29	25	8	28	26	7	29	25	6	30	26	5
PMLD	19	5	7	18	9	7	19	8	7	20	9	2	21	8	5
SLCN	27	88	23	21	74	24	21	54	24	22	42	19	23	40	10
SLD	60	83	51	58	81	52	59	75	56	60	61	61	61	61	58
SPLD	7	42	15	4	34	13	4	25	12	4	17	10	4	15	7
VI	8	12	2	9	9	2	9	10	2	9	12	1	9	9	2
Age Group Totals	360	572	186	342	538	177	339	476	180	347	424	175	353	408	150
Year Totals	1118			1057			995			946			911		



## **Appendix 2**

### **London Borough of Lewisham**

#### **Report of Feedback and Analysis of the SEN Consultation**

**September 2007**

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## Executive Summary

This report sets out the detailed views of stakeholders expressed in response to the London Borough of Lewisham consultation on proposals for changes to provision of education for children with Special Educational Needs.

The report addresses views about the principles which underpin the proposals and the specific proposals themselves.

In addition, it provides commentary on views about the consultation process itself and some general observations about consultation and change management.

### Key findings:

- a) Views were often strongly held and passionately expressed. There is real anxiety and frustration among stakeholders which influenced responses;
- b) Many stakeholders told us that they mistrusted the consultation and that they felt that ‘the deal had already been done’;
- c) Some criticised the language of consultation papers and the timings of focus group sessions;
- d) A significant number of focus group participants told us that they were encouraged by the Authority’s choice to engage consultants as third party facilitators;
- e) Similarly they saw the process of engaging them in debate to be a positive step towards their continued participation in shaping the future of services;
- f) The Authority’s principles are generally seen as positive, although their openness to interpretation drew some strong views from stakeholders;
- g) Many chose not to provide a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer but instead gave a series of conditions under which the principles would be acceptably implemented;
- h) Two issues dominated debate and written responses:
  - i. The first is that a significant number of stakeholders see special schools as a positive choice for many young people with SEN rather than the place to go when you can’t go to mainstream.
  - ii. The second issue was that of statementing; who gets a statement, how this is assessed and the way that this links with resource entitlement were all subjects of discussion;
- i) There is no clear consensus on the proposals for the re-organisation of special education. There is as much support for many of the proposals as there is opposition, though there are many more written respondents in favour of the various proposals than there were focus group participants;

Respondents and participants alike frequently articulate the conditions under which the proposals could be successfully implemented and there is a degree of scepticism about whether adequate resources are available. Because of this, the quantitative data should be read in isolation.

## **1. Introduction**

Place Group Consultants were commissioned by London Borough of Lewisham to assist the Authority in its consultation with key stakeholders; schools, school staff, parents, learners and professionals.

The output from this consultation would then be used by the Borough to help guide the development of proposals for the reorganisation of the provision of services for children and young people with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs.

Our consultants' brief was to support the Authority's team by engaging a wide range of key stakeholders in active dialogue about the proposed changes and also through the analysis of responses to a more conventional process of written responses.

This report sets out the context of the consultation, details the feedback that has been received - through both written submissions and face-to-face engagements - and provides a commentary on the responses canvassed.

### **1.1 Background**

London Borough of Lewisham has for some time needed to confront a significant shortfall in appropriate school places - in its own special schools - for children with particular impairments. This has led to some of those children having to learn in schools outside the Borough.

As the numbers of children with a diagnosis of autism, complex learning and communication needs continues to rise, the Authority has been compelled to review its arrangements for the provision of special education and to propose new solutions which better meet the needs of all the Authority's children.

Place Group was commissioned primarily to support the Authority in reviewing their proposals for improvement of their Special Educational Needs services with stakeholders across the Borough but also to analyse the written responses to the consultation that were received by the Authority.

## 2. Our Approach

2.1 Place's role was to impartially facilitate the process of engagement with stakeholders.

It was the Authority's express desire that we facilitate dialogue with stakeholders who use, deliver, contribute to or are associated with the current services and who as a consequence have 'expert' insight into the implications of implementing the proposals.

We have attempted to remain impartial and objective in writing this report and have desisted from making recommendations.

Nevertheless, we believe that the report is rich in data which we trust the Authority will find valuable in taking its next steps towards meeting the needs of children with SEN.

2.2 Nearly thirty focus groups were organised drawing together stakeholders in groups representing users of particular services. By nature, a focus group is relatively small and designed to enable participants to each have a say and to debate issues with each other in a facilitated forum. As a consequence focus groups were arranged on an 'invitation only' basis in order to try to develop a balanced view of the issues by calling on a range of opinions. The stakeholders engaged in focus groups broadly comprised:

- a) Learners from each of the special schools mentioned in the proposals
- b) Learners with and without impairments attending mainstream schools
- c) Lewisham learners at special schools outside the Borough
- d) Staff from each of the special schools affected
- e) Staff from mainstream schools with potential specialist resource bases
- f) Professionals, including teaching staff
- g) Parents using particular services provided for children and young people with special educational needs

2.3 Invitations to parents were intentionally sent to those known to have strong views about some of the issues contained within the proposals as well to those whose views were not previously known so that each group would have the best balance of views possible.

2.4 In addition, two much larger events were held; one for members of the public, including past and present service users and parents who had not been able to attend a focus group and one for professionals working in Lewisham.

2.5 As impartial facilitators, our consultants' role was to create an environment in which all felt they could participate, to listen to and record views, to stimulate a deeper debate by exploring specific issues and to challenge contributions to verify or establish an accurate understanding of the views expressed.

2.6 Alongside the stakeholder engagements, our team also collated and analysed written responses from all stakeholders. Stakeholders sent written responses in several ways:

- a) By responding by post to seven questions set out at the end of a full consultation paper;
- b) By responding by post to three main questions set out at the end of a short leaflet;
- c) By emailing an account set up for the purpose of the consultation, answering the main points of the consultation in their own way, or by directly answering the seven set questions;
- d) By completing an on-line survey; and
- e) By contacting officers or the Mayors office directly

The total number of written responses received was 186.

### 3. Summary of views and findings about the process

3.1 In order to ensure that the consultation process adopted met the needs of stakeholders, we sought feedback on the process. Overall, the process was considered acceptable; providing participants with a means for voicing their opinions which they would like to see continue. There was some underlying cynicism regarding the ultimate value of the consultation process in determining the future shape of services in the Borough.

The stakeholders' key views on the process adopted are summarised below:

- a) The appointment of impartial third party facilitators for the consultation was received positively;
- b) The process of engagement in focus groups helped to clarify stakeholders' understanding of the proposals;
- c) Stakeholders welcomed the opportunity to begin a closer dialogue directly with officers and wish to see this continue;
- d) Stakeholders frequently appeared to lack a common understanding of the proposals and the reasons for their development;
- e) In some stakeholder groups, views were so similar amongst all group members that it seems likely that considerable preparatory discussion had taken place;
- f) Some stakeholder groups, and in particular some schools wrote 'en masse' and in one case sent photocopies of the same response;
- g) Differences in response rates may mean that the views of some stakeholder groups are over or under-represented
- h) Meadowgate parents chose to devise their own response form and faxed 26 responses on the form directly to the Mayor;
- i) There is a surprisingly low response rate from parents with children at special schools;
- j) Written responses from these parents do not consistently align with the strong oppositional views expressed within focus groups;
- k) Some professionals and to a lesser extent parents chose to focus their respond on those specific questions that directly effected them;
- l) Unions have generally taken a much stronger oppositional view in their written responses than they did in focus group discussions;
- m) There is generally a much higher written response rate from within the primary sector than there is from secondary sector stakeholders;
- n) There was a tangible level of anger, anxiety and frustration across all stakeholder groups about the way the proposals were presented;
- o) There were strong feelings that the 'deal was already done';
- p) Discussions about the mistrust of the process dominated the debate in several focus groups;
- q) In focus groups stakeholders often said they had no information or view about services that did not directly affect them;
- r) Criticism about the timing of consultation sessions was frequently made;
- s) Many stakeholders said they thought the wording of the consultation papers was loaded or misleading; this particularly applies to the shorter summary paper;

- t) Some stakeholders felt that the short paper was too short whilst others found the longer paper too long;
- u) Stakeholders wrote freely and comprehensively on the vast majority of written responses received but did not always directly answer the questions asked; and
- v) A very high proportion of 'yes' or 'no' answers are subsequently qualified with caveats and conditions within written responses; to consider the quantitative responses in isolation is therefore highly misleading.

A detailed breakdown of responses on the process that was adopted in the consultation has been provided in Appendix 1.

#### **4. Summary of views about the current SEN provision**

- 4.1 Within the written responses, there is a significant difference between responses from parents and those of staff, schools and other professionals. Over half the parent respondents state that the existing provision is as they would like it whereas staff, schools and other professionals consistently say that existing provision, within Lewisham, is not as they would like it.
- 4.2 There is no significant difference between the views of parents with children in special schools and those with children in mainstream schools. The common themes for improvement remain; more places, better resources and better training.
- 4.3 Focus group discussions which provided the opportunity for exploration of the issues revealed that there are specific and common aspects of provision which stakeholders would like to change or improve; the main aspects are listed below, and the same areas for improvement are also raised frequently in written responses:
- a) Greater efficiency and a more sympathetic process for statementing is needed;
  - b) There is concern that mainstream schools lack the ability to provide for the range and complexity of needs;
  - c) Greater understanding of children's needs throughout the mainstream schools is required;
  - d) There is a need for increased training and expertise within the mainstream schools (articulated by parents, staff and other professionals);
  - e) Transition arrangements between primary and secondary schools could be improved;
  - f) Outreach services are highly regarded by mainstream schools but special schools may lack the resources to support them;
  - g) There should be more and greater availability of multi-agency input and in particular health and therapist services;
  - h) There should be higher levels and greater consistency of support, information and advice for parents and families (articulated by parents);
  - i) There needs to be greater recognition of parental expertise and increased parental involvement;
  - j) There is a need for more places for children with SEN, and in particular children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder;
  - k) There should be better strategic planning and communication between professionals;
  - l) There should be more flexibility in services and a higher level of resources for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties;
  - m) There is a requirement for properly designed facilities and premises which are accessible to students with SEN;
  - n) There should be greater flexibility in the pedagogical approach and methods of assessment;
  - o) Organisational changes are needed; including changes to class sizes, policies and procedures to enable one-to-one support and create an inclusive culture to enable learners to be taught appropriately;
  - p) A review of school and staff performance criteria should be carried out to take account of a student population with an increasing number of learning disabled students;
  - q) Higher levels of funding is needed to support mainstream and special schools, and
  - r) There is an overall need for more special school places



A detailed breakdown of responses on current SEN provision has been provided in Appendix 2.

## 5. Summary of views about the principles

5.1 A set of principles have been established by the Authority to guide the development of proposals;

- Every child who can be should be educated in a mainstream school;
- Support, training and resources should be provided to ensure that mainstream schools are confident and able to provide children with special needs with a high quality education;
- All special schools have an outreach function, to support and help to develop what mainstream schools offer.
- Children in special schools should have some opportunity, according to their needs, to learn alongside those in mainstream schools;
- Children and young people should be educated locally wherever possible;
- There needs to be a strong partnership between the Authority and parents; this requires good services and information;
- Resources from out-borough placements should be re-directed into mainstream schools;
- Early recognition of a child's needs and early intervention are vital. We will ensure funding is available at an earlier stage, not just through a statement;
- An efficient service for statutory assessment should be maintained for those children who still need it.

5.2 Views about the principles of the proposals are summarised as follows.

- a. A higher number of parents from the primary sector than those from the secondary sector agree with the principles and overall, a total of just under half of all parent respondents agree with them;
- b. A higher proportion of staff from mainstream schools agree with the principles than those from special schools;
- c. A higher proportion of parents with children with SEN in mainstream schools agreed with the principles than those with children at special schools;
- d. There is a very high frequency of providing no 'yes' or 'no' answer but in these cases, narrative is often provided by respondents;
- e. Where focus group participants generally agreed with the principles, they also set out a number of conditions and caveats to their agreement;
- f. Two principles caused particular contention:
  - i) 'Every Child who can be should be educated in a mainstream school' and
  - ii) 'An efficient service for statutory assessment should be maintained for those children who still need it';
- g. The second of these raised debate over the need for statementing and the efficiency of the current service; an issue which did not form part of the consultation process;
- h. A large number of respondents expressed a view that it should not be an automatic assumption that mainstream school was the right place for a child;
- i. Many focus group participants related their resistance to this principle to their own child's experience of mainstream school;
- j. We observed very little optimism that the mainstream estate could ever be an appropriate environment for children with SEN;
- k. A significant number of focus group participants expressed concern about the amount of time it would take to change the mainstream culture;

- l. Stakeholders state in written responses and in focus groups that for many children a special school is the right environment rather than a place to go when you ‘can’t’ go to mainstream;
- m. In sharp contrast, Brent Knoll Learners and learners with and without SEN at mainstream schools were unanimous in expressing a strong desire to attend a specialist base in a mainstream school;
- n. These learners articulated the conditions under which they could attend mainstream school;
- o. Some parents with children at mainstream school expressed very strong views that this was the right option for their child;
- p. Mainstream staff expressed views that there need to be considerably higher levels of resources within mainstream schools to accommodate children with SEN;
- q. Several respondents and focus group participants say that a proper assessment procedure should be in place to determine where children are placed, and
- r. A high number of participants and respondents express concerns about the level of scrutiny that will be in place to monitor the allocation and investment of resources for mainstream school.

A detailed breakdown of responses to the principles has been provided in Appendix 3.

## 6. Summary of views about specific proposals

### Improving the provision of SEN in mainstream settings including outreach services

- a) improvements in mainstream provision should not be to the detriment of special schools – especially if the resources required to do so are prohibitive;
- b) The current organisation of mainstream schools does not support good SEN practice;
- c) Mainstream schools have major challenges if SEN provision is to be successful
  - i. Existing understanding of SEN needs is poor in the view of parents
  - ii. Staff lack the expertise to manage SEN learners
  - iii. Mainstream schools would like to have input from special schools but they, in turn, may lack the resources to help;
- d) Current provision for some categories of SEN learners are inadequate and future provision seems to fail to take the growth in numbers of children with e.g. behavioural difficulties into account;
- e) There is a belief that mainstream schools are currently failing SEN learners;
- f) Integration into mainstream schools can be hampered by the fact that learners attend special schools – they are singled out;
- g) Some learners feel that special schools are the only solution for learners like themselves;

### Views about the introduction of Resource Bases

- h) The nature of resource bases is not universally understood;
- i) The majority of respondents are in favour of resource bases
  - i. Bases will help more children with learning difficulties
  - ii. The schools need specialist resources to teach children effectively
  - iii. The bases will support those children already in mainstream schools
  - iv. The bases will provide a good transition point between mainstream and special schools;
- j) There are, however, some concerns about isolation of children in resource bases and the likelihood of bullying;;
- k) There is concern that resource bases will be less successful in secondary schools than in primary and parents want evidence that they work;
- l) This was a concern that was repeated more generically – parents feel that resource bases are untried and untested.
- m) Some – including the unions - are directly opposed to the introduction of resource bases;
- n) There is a concern that staffing of resource bases is inadequately explained in the proposals;
- o) Concern over ‘who decides who goes where’ was expressed;
- p) Concern was expressed about whether families would have a choice over the right provision for their child;
- q) There is concern about the use of pilots with most parents not wishing their child to participate;
- r) There are some strong advocates for resource bases amongst stakeholders;
- s) There is concern over the availability of multi-disciplinary support within the resource bases;
- t) The PCT would like to be more closely engaged in planning at a strategic level;

## **Views about the proposed increase in provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and other complex needs**

- u) A higher proportion of stakeholders are in favour of these proposals than are not;
- v) Respondents tended to relate the discussion to their own situation rather than the broader context;
- w) There is a consensus that more places are required for ASD and complex needs but the PCT and CAMHS stress that Complex Needs and ASD are very different groups and should not be considered together within the proposals. The proposed ASD provision may not meet the needs of adolescent pupils with severe challenging behaviours;

## **Views relating to the proposed formation of a new, all-through school**

- x) While health professionals and some mainstream schools are in favour of an all-through school, there is no clear consensus from the Meadowgate and Pendragon schools themselves;
- y) There is a belief among a significant number of respondents that the number of places for the proposed new school is less than the combined number provided for at Meadowgate and Pendragon schools and some felt that the proposals amounted to the closure of the special schools;
- z) Concerns were raised about the suitability of the Pendragon site;
- aa) Parents generally recognise the need to reorganise provision but there is a high level of anxiety about how this will be achieved;
- bb) Staff at Meadowgate and Pendragon schools are concerned about the move to an all-through arrangement;
- cc) There is widespread concern for the safety of young learners under the proposals;

## **Views about Brent Knoll**

- dd) There is widespread praise for the service provided by Brent Knoll;
- ee) There is concern that a resource base will not offer an improvement over current provision – contrary to Lord Adonis' statement;
- ff) Staff have anxieties about their future roles and job security;

## **Views about the proposals for governance arrangements for the Hospital Education Service**

- gg) Many stakeholders had inadequate knowledge to express a view;
- hh) Those who were able to express a view, unanimously and strongly stated their preference for the service to be managed independently of Abbey Manor College, and
  - ii) The Hospital Outreach staff state that the service's students are not necessarily suited to a vocational offering above an academic one.

A detailed breakdown of responses to the specific proposals has been provided in Appendix 4.

## 7. General Observations

- 7.1 It is important to note that discussion about the provision of education for children with Special Educational Needs consistently creates very strong and polarised views, and these are reflected in the current national and well publicised debate.

The polarisation of opinion is an indicator that the impact of impairment is unique to the individual and that each persons needs are far more complex than might be assumed through the label created by diagnosis.

The organisation of provision of special education varies across the country and there is no one Authority who could be said to have provided the exemplar model which could be immediately transferred wholesale to other Authorities.

In almost all stakeholder sessions, participants were extremely concerned to discuss the flexibility of proposed arrangements and their ability to meet the wide range of children's needs which is consistent with what we believe to be the underlying cause of the pendulum swing of national public opinion.

- 7.2 It is worth noting that learner stakeholder groups were more definite and united in their views about the arrangement of provision of Special Education.

Two separate groups of stakeholders, learners from Brent Knoll and learner from mainstream schools, of whom four had impairments, were unanimous that it was very important that children with SEN should be included within the mix of a mainstream student population.

By contrast, learners from Pendragon special school were vehemently opposed to students with SEN being placed in the mainstream estate.

- 7.3 Consistent with the national struggle to actually define 'inclusion', opinions about what the term means in Lewisham vary amongst stakeholders; some associate the term with an inflexible policy of mixing students with and without special educational needs within mainstream classes as they exist within the estate at the moment.

A small number of stakeholders and notably, these were parents who have children with SEN in just such arrangements, the thought of what they fear will be an indiscriminate and ill-considered 'dumping' of children with SEN into mainstream schools is not unsurprisingly abhorrent.

- 7.4 Many stakeholders have focused their responses on their own direct and immediate experience of education services and the experiences of their peers, whether they are fellow students, parents or staff.

We would suggest that this is absolutely to be expected and understandable but is likely to have swayed responses in certain directions. It may also be an indicator of the opportunity that exists to promote the role of special schools, raising their profile and status and legitimising their contribution to the combined educational offer within the borough.

- 7.5 Without any intention of diluting or dismissing the views that have been expressed about the proposals, it is important to note that the range of hopes and fears that underpin the responses in Lewisham are consistent with those commonly expressed when faced with the prospect of major change.

Few of us are comfortable with change and it is common for stakeholders to feel angry, anxious, distressed, unsettled, disorientated and frustrated, and these feelings will manifest themselves perhaps more noticeably when the impact of the change is not yet defined in any detail.

Stakeholders need to understand what the changes mean for them and in the absence of new information, often use what they do know as a reference point, sometimes forced to interpret 'silence' or gaps in the detail in ways which are not accurate.

- 7.6 We would suggest that regardless of the very real opportunity that we believe exists to improve outcomes for children with SEN, all stakeholders are acutely aware of the associated risks inherent in an ambitious programme of change and that resistance to signing up to the proposals where this is the case are related to fears which in some cases are overwhelming.

For those who feel strongly that the mainstream estate has failed their child, or indeed where children

themselves feel that mainstream has failed them, the prospect of that experience being repeated for them or anyone else is understandably utterly unacceptable; as a consequence we believe that some stakeholders have rejected the proposals.

- 7.7 The consistent request to provide evidence or proof that the proposals will work and a far higher level of detail than is currently available throughout stakeholder engagements is significant: the majority of the stakeholders who have responded or who have attended groups are not those who envisioned the changes as ‘innovators’, and although some are ‘early adopters’, most are at the very most ‘late adopters’.

A characteristic of ‘late adopters’ and what sets them apart from ‘innovators’ is their need to understand the whole solution in detail and to apply it to their own circumstances. It is almost inevitable that anxiety and disquiet is being expressed at this time; no final decisions have been made and the detail that would allay fears is as a consequence not yet available. A coherent strategy and change programme to which all stakeholders can contribute and own will be an essential component moving forward.

- 7.8 The very fact that so many stakeholders with such diverse views have taken the time and trouble to express them is an indicator of interest, ownership and expertise, a resource that can be harnessed and built upon in whatever improvements follow this report.

## Appendix 1

### Detailed comment on the process adopted

1. **The engagement of independent consultants was widely welcomed.** Throughout the consultation process, there was a widespread positive response to the fact that a team of consultants was engaged to facilitate an impartial engagement process and provide stakeholders with an opportunity to actively contribute their views in open discussion. Several focus groups said that they felt that this signified the potential for a new opportunity for a re-calibrated relationship between themselves and the Authority and its officers.
2. **The opportunity for stakeholders to engage in dialogue was well received.** Several focus groups that we met had not previously fully understood some of the proposals and their implications and found the opportunity to have them explained face-to-face highly beneficial. Stakeholders at focus groups frequently commented that the opportunity for more fluid dialogue with officers was an improvement that they would welcome. It became a common theme of discussion that more sessions like these would be well received by parents and staff as source of both receiving accurate information and for contributing views. One stakeholder commented ‘you realise that we get all our information from each other?’
3. **There is some evidence that the proposals are poorly understood.** Written responses suggest that the respondents may have gleaned information about the proposals from sources other than the consultation paper itself. For example, a common view is expressed amongst a large number of stakeholders that the proposals are a ‘cost cutting’ or ‘cost saving’ exercise despite the fact that the proposals set out plans for a significant investment in training and other resources as well as new premises. Stakeholders also state that they believe that the number of places available to students with special educational needs will be reduced rather than increased, and that the proposals are, in essence, for the ‘closure’ of special schools. Whilst implementing the proposals in full would include phasing out the primary classes at Brent Knoll and quite literally closing the premises of either Meadowgate or Pendragon to bring the two together on a single site, to interpret this as ‘school closure’ is not entirely accurate as a significant number of the current places would still be available. This view also does not take account of the fact that a new post 16 provision is also proposed. The consistency of response about these issues amongst stakeholders may have developed through receiving information such as the NUT paper in circulation or from other lobby groups. Stakeholders also frequently cited an earlier cabinet paper as evidence in which they say it was made clear that the proposals would satisfy BSF objectives and would be ‘cost neutral’.
4. **Participants sometimes responded on behalf of a group rather than as individuals, suggesting a degree of pre-discussion.** There were some focus groups in which the debate was characterised by a set of very strong and shared views about the proposals and typically these were where stakeholders of the same specific provision attended the session together. In both staff and learners’ sessions at Pendragon for example, an almost unanimous perspective that the school should remain as it is was expressed. Similarly in parents’ groups which comprised several parents from Pendragon, the same view was expressed. In one case, the Pendragon parents who attended a focus group told us that because of the ‘invitation only’ approach to organising the focus groups, they were speaking on behalf of a larger group rather than simply on their own / their child’s behalf. This was impossible to verify and inappropriate to question.
5. **Differences in response rate means that some schools’ views may be over or under-represented.** There are a very high number of responses from staff from particular schools, and in particular Myatt Garden and Lucas Vale Primary schools. In both cases, the views of all the staff who have responded are almost exactly aligned. Because the representation of views from these schools is disproportionate, the quantitative analysis of responses has been affected by their views. The specific views of both schools are taken into account under each separate issue. Parents of children at Myatt Garden Primary have also sent more response forms than those with children at other mainstream schools.
6. **The designated response channels were not always adhered to.** Twenty six parents from Meadowgate faxed a copy of an identical response sheet of their own design to the Mayor stating whether or not they are in favour of the amalgamation of Pendragon and Meadowgate schools. Of these, sixteen stated that they are in favour of amalgamation and ten stated that they are not in favour of amalgamation.
7. **With the exception of Meadowgate, there has been a surprisingly low response rate from parents of children in special schools.** Other than parents from Meadowgate, there has been a surprisingly low rate of response from parents of children at special schools, given the strength of feeling expressed by

some parents of these schools expressed at focus groups. In addition to the faxed responses from Meadowgate parents, just over fifty responses were received through various channels. Those who have responded have not expressed views that are aligned to those expressed in focus groups. In fact, whilst in almost all cases, these parents qualify their answers; considerably more parents of children in special schools have responded that they are in favour of improving SEN provision in mainstream schools, introducing specialist resource bases in primary and secondary mainstream schools and with increasing provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. This does not necessarily mean that in all cases these parents are in favour of the specific proposals for each of the special schools.

8. **There are a far greater number of responses from the primary sector than the secondary sector.** This is equally true of parent, staff and school respondents.
9. **Responses from professionals tended to focus on the issues that directly involve them.** There are a number of responses from professionals who chose to send a response only to the question which relates to the future governance of the Hospital Education Outreach Service, and these stakeholders are mostly health professionals who have a direct association or involvement with the service itself.
10. **Trade Unions have all expressed opposition to the proposals.** A number of the unions have responded to the consultation, including the NUT, the ATL and Unison. These Unions all state that they are opposed to the proposals. This reflects the views consistently expressed by them in the lobbying papers and protests that they organised throughout the consultation period. Union members who attended a focus group arranged for them at their request expressed very similar views but during the focus group, representatives took time to explore some of the wider implications of the proposals and suggest the sorts of conditions under which they might be implemented.

### **Stakeholder feelings about the consultation / engagement process**

11. **There was a tangible and extreme level of anxiety, anger and frustration amongst some stakeholders about the way the proposals have been presented and on several occasions, they raised their voices, expressing very strong views.** This was particularly apparent when we spoke to parents, learners and staff from Pendragon School and parents with children attending Brent Knoll primary school. During sessions where stakeholders from these groups contributed, the integrity of the process was questioned with considerable force, with many expressing a view that the 'deal is already done' and that the Authority's decisions about their own or the children's futures have already been made.
12. **Mistrust of the consultation process dominated several focus groups.** This reduced the time to debate the actual proposals, leaving us to conclude that considerable preparatory debate had already taken place before the those groups were held in which scrutiny of the process had been a significant topic of debate. We feel that this belief that the stakeholder engagement has masked a disingenuous process is one that has had a significant influence on the anger and frustration that was expressed in various sessions about the specific proposals themselves. The degree of cynicism expressed about the transparency of the process itself is still a factor but much less marked within written responses.

In other groups where stakeholders had not previously met each other, they expressed and displayed much less cynicism and a greater diversity of opinion. These groups were generally more mixed in the services they used and typically included parents who have children with SEN who are placed in mainstream schools as well as those who are placed in special schools.

13. **Stakeholders in focus groups were most vocal and informed about the services that they use directly.** On many occasions we were told by participants that they had no opinion at all about proposals for schools other than those with which they had direct association; some did not want to discuss them at all. This correlates with the written responses; stakeholders have frequently answered only some and sometimes only one of the questions.

### **Stakeholder views about the timing of proposals**

14. **Although focus groups were organised at various times to accommodate stakeholder availability, there was criticism of the timings.** Some criticism has been raised about the timing of focus groups and a small number of parents have been very angry about this. It is worth noting that almost 30 meetings were facilitated over a six week period at different times of the day, specifically to accommodate stakeholders with different commitments. Where we were made aware that the proposed timing of particular meetings was inconvenient or inappropriate, a new meeting was arranged to accommodate this group.



## **Stakeholder views about their own involvement in developing services**

- 15. There was a consistently strong desire expressed in focus groups for stakeholders to continue to participate in and contribute to the shaping of services moving forward.** In part this appears to be driven by a desire to contribute personal and professional expertise but participation is also seen as a key factor in assuring stakeholders that the right decisions are being made and providing them with an ability to evaluate developments and see progress or otherwise for themselves, allowing them perhaps some sense of control that they may not have previously felt.

## **Stakeholder views about the composition of the consultation documents**

- 16. The distributed consultation documents were criticised on several counts.** Much criticism has been directed towards the consultation documents that were circulated and in particular, the shorter of the two with many parents and professionals asserting that there was insufficient background information in the booklet, that the questions were ‘the wrong questions’ and that their phrasing inhibited parents in particular from expressing their real views. Stakeholders have said that they believe that the questions are phrased in such a non-controversial way that as one stakeholder put it ‘it’s a bit like signing up for love and happiness’.

By contrast to those who thought the short response form was too short or superficial, one stakeholder expressed the view in a focus group that the longer of the two documents was far too long and that this was inappropriate for working parents of children with SEN who have very little spare time to read and digest this amount of text.

- 17. The majority of written responses contain a considerable amount of additional feedback.** We can confirm that the majority of response sheets contains a considerable amount of feedback and whilst it is difficult to gauge what might have happened with a different style of questions, with more questions or with even the ‘right questions’, it is important to note that the text included on most of the returned sheets frequently ignores the exact wording of the questions and discusses instead the issues more broadly as the respondent sees fit. In fact, there are several instances in which a respondent has ticked ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to a question and then goes on to qualify it with an answer that contradicts this.
- 18. Parents and other stakeholders have expressed their views regardless of the document format that they were presented with.** Sometimes the responses take the form of a two line email or a single paragraph on a printed response form, largely ignoring the formal questions themselves.

**Almost all respondents qualified their ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers with comments.** It is essential to note that there are very few examples where respondents have not qualified their ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers; more commonly these answers are conditional. For example, there is a significant number of people who have said that they agree with a specific proposal but have said they only agree with it ‘if resources are put in place’ which is frequently the case for responses to question 2 in the full paper or ‘if special school places are not affected’ an answer that is repeated in response to questions 4 and 5.

## Appendix 2

### Detailed comment on the current SEN provision

1. **Parents tend to relate SEN provision to their own child's situation or that of similar children.** In a large number of written responses, parents of children from both mainstream and special schools who say that the provision is as they would like it, relate this question to their own child's current situation or children like theirs. These quotes provide a snapshot:

- a) 'My child is making good progress at Coopers Lane Hearing Impaired Unit'
- b) 'My little boy is getting better since he was statemented and his special needs teacher has started to help him'
- c) 'My son attends mainstream school and although it took us a long time to get the support we needed to be in mainstream school, we feel we made the right decision for my son and the school have dealt with his needs very well'
- d) 'Mainstream has proved the correct option for my son and I would like it to remain an option for all children with SEN'
- e) 'She is able to do her school work on her own' (parent of learner at a Pendragon school)
- f) 'Currently Brent Knoll provides a small school environment with an ability to set the lessons commensurate with students' ability'
- g) 'Yes because Brent Knoll is perfect for my son and no because I know of other parents struggling to find places for children with special needs'
- h) 'As far as Watergate is concerned, it meets the present development needs of my son'

2. **Where parents felt that current provision was as they like it, they were keen to stress their satisfaction with their children's particular school.** Similar issues were also discussed at parents' focus groups and parents with children in special schools were particularly keen to emphasise their satisfaction with the particular school itself and in direct relation to this, their anxiety that places for children like their own might not be as available in the future. This is discussed later in the report. It is less frequently the case that parents who responded that the provision was not as they would like it relate the question to their own child's circumstances. The issues raised above by focus groups are also raised by individual parents in their written responses:

- a) 'Not enough places in special schools, not enough staff or places in secondary'
- b) 'Teachers have little or no knowledge of conditions like Autism and parents have to fight to get something done'
- c) 'The provision does not meet the current needs of the boroughs children. The provision should be increased not reduced; there should be more places at special schools'
- d) 'I do not think there is enough provision in Lewisham for children with SEN. Both my children have been in classes with SEN children who need more help than is being provided by well-meaning but poorly trained TAs'
- e) 'There is insufficient physiotherapy provision.....the current waiting list for physiotherapy is closed and children on the list are waiting for over a year, during which time, parents are receiving little or no support'
- f) 'Cutbacks and insufficient funding in SEN schools has meant that provision and resources have decreased which has affected our children's education'
- g) 'There are not enough places for children on the Autistic Spectrum'

3. **There is no significant difference between the views of parents with children in special schools and those with children in mainstream schools.** In that the common themes for improvement are stated as a need for more places, better resources and better training.

4. **In written responses over two thirds of schools and three quarters of individual staff members said that the current SEN provision was not as they would like it to be.** Governors and governing bodies responded similarly. The main areas that concern respondents are related to capacity within the estate to provide the right education.

5. **Respondents across all groups consistently state that there are not enough specialist places for children with special educational needs.** In particular, schools and their staff mention the need for additional places for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and 'severe' learning difficulties. Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy states that it feels there is no speech and language therapy service available to secondary age children, and All Saints and Torridon Junior also state that the SaLT services and other health services are insufficient, as do a significant number of individual staff respondents. Northbrook and Catford High both note a need for more provision for children with ASD and Northbrook also states that there is a greater need for provision for young people with emotional social and behavioural difficulties. Concern about provision for students with SEBD is expressed by Governors of Forest Hill and by a large number of individual school staff.
6. **Myatt Garden and Launcelot schools express concern about the borough's ability to provide for the range and complexity of need.** In particular, this is perceived to be a problem within the mainstream schools. In focus groups, all the schools that we spoke to also stated views that there were insufficient places for children with learning difficulties and in particular for children with ASD.
7. **A number of mainstream schools mention in their responses that they would like improved outreach services.** There is considerable praise mentioned throughout the response forms for the outreach services provided by Brent Knoll amongst mainstream primary schools.
8. **To parents, many of the schools and a large number of individual staff from both mainstream and special schools mention that they feel there is paucity of expertise within the mainstream schools.** This includes insufficient provision of training to properly support and teach children with special educational needs.
9. **Many of the schools and school staff state that early intervention and assessment should be improved.** They go on to state that they have considerable concerns about the changes to statementing for children on lower matrix levels. Staff and parents alike express their concern about the reduction of statements and a fear that this will reduce entitlement to support for some children. Another common theme that respondents link to this is the incidence of long waiting lists to receive therapist and other specialist support. This is raised by both parents and staff.
10. **Several school respondents and individual staff state that there is a need for greater flexibility of services** Including outreach services with many linking this to providing a personalised approach to support deriving from Every Child Matters; though the Every Child Matters agenda is discussed more frequently in relation to the range of placements available.
11. **Professionals would like to see closer collaboration across services.** Professionals from a range of disciplines, including school staff and health professionals, state that there needs to be a greater level of strategic planning and closer partnership between professionals.
12. **Transitional arrangements between primary and secondary schools could be improved.** A small number of professionals, including the LSC, raise a concern that post-16 provision for children with SEN in Lewisham is currently limited. The LSC also states that there are transitional arrangements for children with SEN between primary and secondary schools could be improved and made less disruptive.
13. **Travel times for children with SEN should be minimised.** Both the LSC and the Green Party state that they have concerns that travel to a special school for children with SEN frequently involves a lengthy journey across the borough.
14. **There is a need to provide particular specialist provision.** The NADCS state that they feel the provision for deaf children in the Authority is not as they would like it and in particular the Authority's provision for profoundly deaf children which they feel may not be adequately provided for solely by Sedgemoor School. The PCT and CAMHS also stated that total communication and Aural / Oral communication are two different communication approaches and that provision for the latter should be contained within the proposal. In addition, they identified the need for specialist provision for visually impaired children in the primary estate and challenged whether the mainstream estate will be able to support children who have Sickle Cell, Brittle Bone Disease, Cystic Fibrosis and children requiring rectal diazepam.
15. **Waiting times for statutory assessments (statements) are considered to be too long.** In focus groups there was considerable discussion about the length of time parents and their children have to wait for statements, regardless of where children were ultimately placed. Parents frequently expressed a view that their child's statement was the sole catalyst for them receiving the support, understanding and services they needed and provided them with an entitlement for a place at a special school for their child. In addition to the length of time

that they said the process takes, parents frequently told us that they felt that the system was overly bureaucratic and complicated and that rather than having received advice and support throughout the process, they felt they had been obstructed or ignored by officers.

16. **Parents and staff expressed concerns about the shortage of multi-agency staff and in particular health professionals.** A related issue of the availability of and access to resources also emerged in focus groups. Parents and staff teams alike expressed concerns that there is a national and local shortage of multi agency staff and in particular health professionals and as a consequence they said that they felt their children were not getting the input that they required. The PCT and CAMHS also expressed concerns that there is neither the staff nor the funding to pay for therapists and other health professionals.

### **Views of young people expressed in focus groups**

17. **In their focus groups, learners expressed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the services that are provided to them.** Some learners passionately expressed views that they wanted no change at all. This was particularly true at Pendragon School. At Brent Knoll School however, whilst the learners told us about their satisfaction with the school and in particular the school's ability to meet their range of needs, the young people were unanimous that they find having to attend a special school detrimental to their social relationships. They each told us of incidents where they have been bullied, have lost friends or have lost the quality of their friendships by disclosing the nature of the school they attend. A small number of the Brent Knoll children told us that they did not like the distance that they have to travel to school. All agreed that 'being different' or perhaps being seen to be different was unhelpful.
18. **Children from mainstream schools want staff to develop a greater understanding of their needs and to make adjustments for them without singling them out.** They expressed strong views that although they much preferred being in a mainstream school, they wanted staff to develop an even greater understanding of their needs and to make adjustments for them without patronising them or singling them out. They said that they felt that people avoided the subject of disability, that it is an important issue and that the whole school culture would improve if it were discussed openly, perhaps even taught in PHSE.

## Appendix 3

### Detailed comment on the responses to the principles

1. **Opinion is divided on the principles.** A number of broad principles set the context for the proposals for improving the provision for children and young people with SEN. Just over half the parents of children in mainstream primary schools who responded agree with the principles, whereas fewer than half the parents of children in mainstream secondary schools who responded agree with them. Just fewer than half the parents with children in primary and secondary schools who responded agree with the principles.
2. **Parents are more likely to agree with the principles than mainstream school staff.** Under a quarter of the staff from mainstream schools stated that they agree with the principles and most of the special school staff did not agree with them. Over half the parents with children in primary special schools said that they agree with the principles whereas only a third of parents of children in secondary special schools agree with them.
3. **Many respondents are uncertain about their agreement with the principles or qualified their agreement in some way.** A significant number of respondents in all groups either did not tick 'yes' or 'no' or said that they were unsure. In fact, the issues raised by respondents - whether they state that they agree with the principles or not - have some common themes. Debate in focus groups very much echoes the tenor of written response. It is important to note that almost all written respondents qualified their answers with comments, whether they agreed or disagreed and there is a synergy between what written respondents say and what was said in focus group discussions.
4. **Agreement was frequently conditional on certain conditions being met.** Where respondents or focus group participants generally agree with the principles, they frequently qualify this agreement with a statement which says that they only agree under certain conditions. These conditions relate to the way that the principles should be implemented and are summarised as follows:
  - a) That there must be more resources in mainstream schools;
  - b) There must be better training for staff;
  - c) That the number of special school places should not be reduced, and
  - d) That pupil / staff ratios would need to be changed.
5. **Two principles appear particularly contentious.** Two principles appear to cause particular contention amongst those who disagree with the principle and to a lesser extent those who agree:
  - a) 'Every Child who can be should be educated in a mainstream school', and
  - b) 'An efficient service for statutory assessment should be maintained for those children who still need it'.

A large number of respondents and participants who disagree with the first of these principle express very strong views that some children can attend a mainstream school, but that this does not mean that it is the right place for them.

#### On the principle to educate every child who can be in a mainstream school:

6 **There is a widely held view that families should have the option to select mainstream or special school for their children.** In written responses as in focus groups, stakeholders stress the diversity of children's needs and their view that it is important for them to have the option of where their child should attend school. There are three related issues expressed by stakeholders. The first is an issue of whether the mainstream schools are appropriate for children with SEN, the second a principle of retaining parental preference and the third the definition of the children who 'can't' and the way in which children and young people will be assessed to inform placement, and how decisions are reached.

7 **There is a common perception that Placing a child in a mainstream school would be detrimental to them.** Certainly within the parents focus groups, we observed a common perception that placing a child with special educational needs in a mainstream school would be detrimental to them, though when explored through questioning and challenging, stakeholders frequently said that their views were based on the historical experiences of their child attending a mainstream school in the past. Mainstream and special school staff have also expressed concerns that their schools are not equipped with the staff, resources or class sizes to properly support children with SEN.

There appears very little optimism amongst those parents and staff who disagree with the principles that the mainstream

estate can adapt sufficiently to accommodate their child's needs or that new resource bases could ever replicate the quality of education that they say that children receive in a special school.

**8 Many stakeholders from both schools' and parents' groups express the view that a child-centred approach which they relate to the Every Child Matters agenda would not automatically promote a mainstream school above a special school as the best option for every child** Instead, they would prefer an arrangement that considers every case on its merit. There is a subtle but important difference between the Authority's proposal and that expressed consistently by stakeholders. Under the Authority's proposal, children would attend a mainstream school unless they 'can't'. Stakeholders express a view that some children should go not go to a mainstream school if a special school would provide them with better experiences and outcomes.

**9 In sharp contrast, two groups of learners, those from Brent Knoll and those from mainstream schools, with and without SEN, were strong and unanimous advocates of children with SEN attending mainstream schools.** For those in mainstream, they discussed the benefits as being the ability to be socially included both at school and in later life. They recognised that parents were anxious about this and some told us that in their own schools, things weren't always perfect but that they want to be 'as employed and visible and everyone else'. They saw other benefits such as the school representing a truer cross section of society and indeed the one in which they would need to operate later within life. One non-disabled learner suggested that there was too much focus on the benefits of 'inclusion' for students with SEN and not enough on the benefits for learners without SEN, relaying how much he had learnt from a peer with autism. Fear of bullying within mainstream which was a consistent theme in all groups was also discussed by these learners who felt that cultures could change if you put children together early enough.

**10 The Brent Knoll learners told us about very painful experiences of being bullied because they attend a special school.** One said: 'I had some friends and then I told them where I go to school; they're still my friends but we've lost the bond', whilst others reported losing friends or being picked on when people find out which school they attend. These young people were unanimous in their positive view about the way that they are supported at the school and wanted to have access to the same level of support and understanding but within a resource base at a mainstream school.

**11 The young people told us clearly that their access, learning, support and health needs must be met in a mainstream school.** They went into some detail describing these needs to us but they were highly enthusiastic about the prospect of these needs being met in the context of a mainstream estate. They advocated a training programme for non-disabled learners at mainstream schools and peer mentors who would look out for them and help them when they got into difficulties.

**12 There has been a strong level of support amongst written respondents for more children with SEN being taught in mainstream schools.** This is particularly noticeable amongst parents of children with SEN attending primary mainstream schools. These parents say that the mainstream school is the right place for their child.

**13 Mainstream schools are concerned about their ability to cope with SEN provision.** Mainstream schools express views in written responses that although they support inclusion, staff should not be forced to take on a greater burden than that which they already have and some clearly state that the mainstream schools will not cope. Catford High points out that they feel schools have a vital role in determining whether a placement is suitable or not and Northbrook expresses concerns that young people could not be forced into places that are not suitable. Staff members who support the principles also express concern that placing children in mainstream schools can only work if much higher levels of training, support and advice are available to them.

**14 Pendragon learners were anxious to not repeat previous poor experiences in attending mainstream schools.** Although Pendragon learners were positive about their experiences at their own school, were critical of their previous experiences from mainstream school and the fact that they are targeted for bullying as a consequence of having Special Educational Needs. The difference between the groups is that the Brent Knoll learners were hopeful that changes to the culture and organisation of the mainstream estate could be made, whereas Pendragon students appeared to have arrived at the conclusion that things within mainstream would remain the same and were clear that they did not want to return at all.

**15 The issue of parental preference was expressed more strongly in focus groups than in written responses.** Parents in particular, and especially those whose children attend special schools, expressed concern that if the number of children with MLD or less severe incidence of need could not be placed in special schools in the future, then their choice as parents would be reduced. In fact the same parents also recounted their own experiences of not having been presented with choice of placement in the first instance and instead having to rely on the statementing process to secure a special school place for their child.

**On the principle to provide an efficient service for statutory assessment for those children who still need it:**

16 **Almost all parents and staff focus groups expressed concerns about reducing statements and a high degree of concern about the way that funding levels would be agreed, distributed and monitored.** The proposal to reduce the number of statements for children on lower matrix levels is discussed less in the written responses than it was at the focus groups. Almost all parents and staff focus groups expressed concerns about reducing statements and a high degree of concern about the way that funding levels would be agreed, distributed and monitored. The subject was also a considerable point of discussion in the main professionals' meeting.

17 **There is concern about effective provision in the absence of statements.** Many, but not all, parents who attended focus groups say that have fought hard to get a statement for their child and are very cynical about whether devolved resources would either be sufficient or would be appropriately spent on those children who need it most in the absence of a statement directing the school in how it provided resources

18 **There is lack of clarity and anxiety about how children will be assessed as to their suitability for attendance at mainstream schools.** The Green Party state that although they believe that it is a human right for children to be educated in an all ability setting, the proposals do not set out the assessment criteria. This concern was echoed in focus groups. In particular, the group for parents with children in special schools suggested that a transparent and third party assessment panel was introduced to ensure fairness of process and outcome. Special school staff in both focus groups and their written responses also expressed their concern that they do not feel that there is sufficient clarity at this stage about which children would be attending special schools in the future under the proposals.

19 **Parents with children at special schools and special schools themselves express particular concerns about the scrutiny with which spending would be monitored.** This concern is exacerbated by the fact that the level of understanding of SEN within mainstream schools is perceived to fall dramatically short of what would be required.

**One particularly favoured principle was that the Authority and parents should have more direct dialogue with each other.** Parents of children who use Respite Care were particularly vocal about this, welcoming more opportunity to receive information about what was happening to their child, better access to the 'bigger picture' and to be able to ask questions of the Authority when they needed. Nevertheless, most groups echoed this and groups were very keen to become members of a reference group, helping to reflect upon and shape future services.

## Appendix 4

### Detailed comment on the specific proposals

#### Improving the provision of SEN in mainstream settings including outreach services

1. **In almost all categories of respondents, there is a majority response in favour of improving the provision of SEN in mainstream schools.** In some categories - mainstream staff and schools and parents of children in primary schools - over 80% of respondents agree with this proposal. This said, the vast majority of the respondents qualify their answers and a significant number of respondents were not able to give a specific 'yes' or 'no' answer to the question, typically adding to their form that 'it depends'. Particular issues that are raised as qualification in response to this question are:
  - a) Outreach services should not be at the cost of special school provision;
  - b) Outreach services have limitations;
  - c) Some students are unable to cope in mainstream settings due to large class sizes, lots of different teachers and rigidity of practice;
  - d) The 'strain' on teachers in mainstream is already high and greater support is required;
  - e) The playground and social areas are as important as learning environments – children with SEN also need to feel they belong here;
  - f) Resources must be sufficient to support the schools, and
  - g) School performance criteria need to be reviewed to reflect a higher number of children with SEN
  - h) **The most common qualification in written responses to this question is that the improvement of mainstream must not be to the detriment of special schools.** This includes two issues: outreach services should not be considered as a proper substitute for special school teaching and support, and the increased number of mainstream places proposed should not cause a reduction of special school places.
2. **The most common qualification in written responses to this question is that the improvement of mainstream must not be to the detriment of special schools.** This includes two issues: outreach services should not be considered as a proper substitute for special school teaching and support, and the increased number of mainstream places proposed should not cause a reduction of special school places.
3. **There is significant concern amongst stakeholders that the amount of additional resources required to appropriately support children in mainstream may be so great as to be prohibitive.** This links with the common assertion that mainstream schools are already having great difficulty supporting children with SEN already on roll. There is a layer of mistrust expressed amongst some respondents that the Authority intends to make the required investment at all. This may derive from a belief amongst some stakeholders that the proposals amount to a 'cost cutting exercise' as described above. The stakeholders of course could not support such an argument if they were also to subscribe to a genuine intent to invest significant amounts in the mainstream estate.
4. **The organisation of mainstream schools does not support good practice in SEN.** Participants and respondents from mainstream and special school staff teams and unions consistently describe the 'strain' that they say is put on teachers and support staff where resources to support children with SEN are not available. Although they do not attribute the strain simply to this; the organisation of mainstream schools, with larger class sizes than special schools and policies and performance measures is seen to inhibit good practice and inadequate training is seen as a significant issue.
5. **Parents expressed very strong feelings about what they perceive to be a very poor understanding of the needs of disabled children amongst mainstream schools.** Union representatives also express clear concerns in both written responses and in face-to-face discussion about their colleagues and members being inadequately equipped with training, support or advice to work successfully with the combination of children with SEN and their mainstream, non-disabled peers.
6. **Many respondents and participants expressed the view that there are currently inadequate places for children with Autism.** Particularly in the context of a dramatic rise in diagnosis rates. Whilst not all of them welcomed the proposed arrangements, increasing the number of places appears to be an essential improvement. A number of



participants and respondents questioned the sufficiency of the proposed number of places available in meeting the increasing diagnosis of children on the Autistic Spectrum. As a related issue, as described earlier, a number of respondents say that they feel that the number of these places is reducing under the proposals where it is in fact increasing. We suggest that these stakeholders do not perceive that additional places provided through the new resource bases are comparable or 'real' places.

**7. Some stakeholders, and in particular unions and mainstream schools, state that the management of behaviour is not adequately addressed either through the current provision or through the proposed arrangements.** Participants in focus groups and respondents from mainstream secondary schools say that they wish the Authority to consider the behavioural issues associated with children with SEN in the wider context of their general intake – this was a particularly strong theme of discussion in the focus group at Catford High but was also raised in other staff focus groups and is articulated in a number of responses, including those from parents. The Unions state their concern as being about the 'critical balance' of learners who have behavioural difficulties as well as other impairments in large classes and the difficulties that this causes the whole school population, including those learners with no behavioural difficulties. A number of stakeholders at various focus groups stated that there is a significant percentage of children who have behavioural difficulties that do not have any diagnosis at all and they are concerned that resources allocated to schools to manage the behaviour of a 'standard' class would be inadequate. This was a particularly noticeable concern at the focus group for Catford High and that of the union representatives. Northbrook school said that greater flexibility in the working relationship between Abbey Manor College and the mainstream estate, with more dual roll placements and outreach work was an important improvement that needs to be made.

**8. There is concern that the rise in the number of children with behavioural difficulties has not been adequately provided for.** A recurrent theme expressed by groups of stakeholders throughout the engagement process was that they felt that the numbers of students with behavioural difficulties has risen and that this increase is neither taken into account in mainstream schools nor acknowledged in the proposals with an associated plan to improve provision. The former of these assertions is expressed most commonly by staff from secondary schools and the schools themselves.

**9. A very small number of written respondents stated a very clear dissatisfaction with provision at special schools,** stating that the schools did not teach their child adequately or prepare them for real life, describing them as 'baby sitting services'.

**10. In several focus groups, considerable criticism was levelled at the ability of mainstream schools to support and properly teach children with SEN,** though this was not raised in support of argument to improve provision in mainstream. More commonly, this view was asserted in support of an argument to maintain if not increase special school provision. In fact a small number of participants told us that investing in mainstream schools was a waste of money and that it would be better spent on special schools.

**11. There is a belief that mainstream schools are failing learners with SEN.** The belief that mainstream schools are currently 'failing' a significant number of learners with SEN has been one of the most consistent assertions across almost all categories and respondents and focus group participants, regardless of whether stakeholders said they thought something should be done about this. By contrast, parents of children in mainstream primary schools stated an opposite viewpoint.

**12. Attendance at a special school is perceived by young learners to be a major barrier to their acceptance into a mainstream school environment.** In their focus groups, young people from special schools recounted examples of their experiences in mainstream schools and they generally linked these to the fact that they attend a special school. Their reasons ranged from teachers and other staff not understanding their learning and behavioural difficulties (and therefore not being able to manage them properly) to what they perceive as the lack of flexibility within the mainstream system. The latter includes an example of a young person believing that the reason they attend special school is that no one in their previous mainstream school knew how to give them their medication.

**13. Learners consistently praised the way in which their own special schools supported them,** and there are perhaps some common areas which are useful when thinking about how to transfer good practice from special schools to mainstream. Common themes in groups was the shared feeling that in special schools, learners 'difficulties' were understood and 'no big deal'; in fact those learners from mainstream school said that they had also experienced some sensationalism and curiosity about their impairment when they first joined a mainstream school.

**14. Young people consistently talked about the need for schools to balance understanding their difference, the range of their needs and meeting those needs with treating them 'just like everyone else'.** One learner from a mainstream school told us about a time when she had sent a rather rude email and being told 'we will respond to you through your LSA'. She was frustrated by this and said she felt slightly patronised.

**15. Striking the right balance between ‘strictness’ and ‘kindness’ is a skill found in good special schools.**

Meadowgate learners told us ‘we like our teachers because they are strict and kind’, and although there was no specific articulation of this, there was an implication that previous teachers had not been able to strike that balance.

**16. Pendragon learners consistently expressed strong views that special schools were the only solution for learners like themselves** though they were perhaps the most vocal in expressing their high levels of dissatisfaction with their experiences of mainstream schools.

**17. In written responses, those who state that they are satisfied with the current provision generally relate this to their own experience of their child** and in general these responses come from parents and staff from the special schools most affected by the proposals. A number of respondents use the phrase ‘don’t mend it if it isn’t broken’ but again this often relates to the learning experience of specific children for whom the special schools are clearly working well. These views are mirrored by staff and governors of special schools, who state that they want to retain their current organisational arrangements regardless of what other improvements they would like made.

**18. A significant number of staff in mainstream schools voiced their very strong support of the proposal to have greater input from the special schools** and high satisfaction about the outreach services provided by Brent Knoll primary school. Staff and governors from Brent Knoll said that their outreach service is at its most effective when they can provide mentees with the ability to observe real teaching practices at the school and that this service cannot be provided if the primary provision is phased out.

**19. In addition, staff from special schools expressed concerns that they themselves are inadequately resourced to provide an effective outreach service** whilst still maintaining their own role. In order to perform a role successfully, they state that they will need additional expert training so that they can retain and improve their skill levels. Finally these staff expressed anxieties about whether their jobs would change and whether they would under new arrangements be required to work in mainstream rather than in special schools.

#### **Views about the Introduction of Resource Bases**

**20. In each category of respondents to the written consultation, there is a majority response in favour of the introduction of resource bases.** As is the case with other questions however, a large number of those who said that they agree with this proposal also expressed reservations, provided caveats or conditions. The main caveats and reservations are summarised as follows:

- a) The bases are suitable for some but not all children with SEN;
- b) There must be sufficient resources, including trained and skilled staff if they are to work for children;
- c) The bases should be complementary to special school places rather than replacing them;
- d) Parents and professionals should have a strong voice and choice in where children are placed;
- e) The number of resource base places must be sufficient for those children who need them;
- f) The social needs of children with SEN, including interaction at break times and extended school activities must be also taken into account in introducing bases into mainstream schools;
- g) Funds for children with SEN in mainstream must not be solely used within a resource base but must be used for those who are simply within the mainstream classes

**21. Many stakeholders state that they have concerns about the potential isolation of children in resource bases and the likelihood of bullying.** These views are particularly expressed by parents of children who attend special schools, special school staff and special school students. In fact this was the most common anxiety expressed by students from most of the special schools during our engagements, though students at Brent Knoll talked with some optimism about the possibility of changing this culture and training learners and staff to be more aware of their needs.

Students with and without SEN attending mainstream school talked at some length about bullying and said that bullying was less of an issue in reality than parents thought and one added ‘parents always worry’. Another felt that where there were a greater numbers of children with disabilities, the culture was more likely to change.

**22. Several key themes emerge that support the proposal.** Several key themes emerge in the reasons for supporting this proposal. The following summarises the themes:

- a) The bases will help more children with learning difficulties;

- b) The schools need specialist resources to teach children effectively;
- c) The bases will support those children with SEN already absorbed within the mainstream roll;
- d) The bases will provide a good transition point between mainstream and special schools and vice versa
- e) **The proposed phasing out of Brent Knoll colours the views of respondents towards resource bases.** Many respondents, and particularly those staff and parents from primary schools, expressed a specific view about the bases in relation to the proposed phasing out of Brent Knoll Primary provision, vehemently opposing this proposal, whether they generally agreed with the proposal to introduce resource bases or not. Of written respondents, two thirds of staff who raised this concern were from two schools, Myatt Garden and Lucas Vale.

23. **There is a suggestion from some respondents that every school should have a resource base.** Several respondents suggest in their written responses that every school should have a resource base and this was also raised in parents' focus groups. There are three reasons that stakeholders give for this suggestion. The first is linked to other discussions about the belief that there will be more places needed than those provided. This argument is also expressed by multi agency professionals including the Early Years Team. The second reason is one of proximity to children's homes and is linked to the principle that the borough should provide places in Lewisham; some parents stated that their most local school was actually across the Borough boundaries in a neighbouring Authority. The third reason is one of parity in culture; a range of stakeholders express the view that if the inclusive culture is to work, all schools should have specialist provision.

24. **There is concern that resource bases will be less successful in secondary schools than in primary schools.** A number of parents with children in mainstream primary schools state that they are less sure that bases will work in a secondary school culture than in primary schools and this view that secondary school culture is not appropriate is also expressed by unions and secondary school staff.

25. **Perrymount primary school is praised by parents and professionals.** Several of the parents with children at Perrymount Primary School state how happy they are with the way that the school has worked with them and their child. Praise for the school is also shared by professionals; Honor Oak Early Years Centre says of Perrymount 'Excellent school. It fully embraced children with SEN. There were no barriers and they were able to adapt where necessary. When I visited with a prospective family, they were friendly and welcoming'.

26. Specific praise was given to Sedgehill by a parent with a child attending the school whilst some others whose children go to special schools said that Sedgehill mainstream students bullied their children when they saw them on school transport.

27. **The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) express a view that Sedgehill school will need to employ deaf role models, deaf instructors, communications support workers and interpreters and will need to establish new ways of working.** It makes a more general comment that disabled children can become more isolated in a resource base than in a mainstream school. It further states that choice should be offered to parents with children with disabilities and that resource bases are only one type of service within what needs to be a continuum.

28. **Those who directly oppose the proposal to introduce the resource bases are represented in each stakeholder category and include amongst them some of the unions.** Some of their reasons for not supporting the proposal are already described earlier in the report and relate to the capacity of mainstream schools to manage the additional intake, and specifically, the 'critical balance' of children without SEN and those with SEN in any one school. This point was re-iterated in focus groups and stakeholders raised the issue that as they saw it, many children had additional needs but fell below the statementing threshold so that resources and support to meet their additional needs were not available; as a consequence when a large number of these children were enrolled in any one school, they felt that the balance overloaded the teachers and that adding a resource base in this context was inappropriate and perhaps unworkable. The NUT also state that the staff who will need to be up-skilled in schools with resource bases should be properly remunerated.

29. **Staffing of resource bases is inadequately explained in the proposals.** The Headteacher of Pendragon School takes issue with the phraseology used during the course of engagements in describing the way resource bases will be staffed. In particular, he questions the use of the phrase 'staffed similarly to special schools' and makes the point that this would mean replicating the breadth and depth of expertise in his own staff team, and would include the need to provide staff who had high levels of skill and experience in both SEN and curriculum areas. This last point was also raised by the staff team at Pendragon during their focus group. Pendragon staff were extremely concerned about the resourcing of bases and wanted reassurance that learners placed in this arrangement would receive both SEN and subject specific teaching expertise in equal measures, so that there is a comparable learning experience and the same high level outcomes for young people placed in a resource base rather than a special school. They stated that very size

of bases suggests to them that they would not have the capacity to deliver the breadth of the curriculum offer that is provided by Pendragon.

**30. Concerns about the staffing arrangements for the bases were raised throughout the consultation.** The staff at Brent Knoll, Pendragon and Meadowgate expressed specific anxieties about their own futures since they currently represent a significant proportion of the specialist staff within the Authority. They asked a number of questions such as: ‘Will I be redeployed?’ and also ‘Will I be expected to train other staff and if so how will this happen?’ and ‘How might my role look later if special school staff are going to support the staff in bases?’ Staff found it difficult to be reassured by our explanation that it is too early in the process to have arrived at this level of detail. A related issue was also raised across stakeholder groups that staff with the skills and qualifications required would not be available in sufficient numbers to staff the number of bases within the proposed timescale.

**31. The process of directly engaging stakeholders revealed a level of misconception amongst participants about the nature of a ‘resource base’** and some of those who attended with an already fixed position on the proposals found it difficult to shift their position during the group. Others, by contrast found that in developing their understanding about how they could work in practice and how they are working elsewhere were pleasantly surprised, reassured and intrigued. One parent told us:

‘I don’t think people understand what these are about – I didn’t. At the moment, they just feel loss and they don’t really know what’s coming’ and another said ‘if they work, I feel much easier about my child going to mainstream’.

**32. They still expressed a need to be reassured about the availability of funding to support the bases and a strong desire to support their implementation with advice and training.** Some parents talked about their own positive experience of having a child in a resource base either in Lewisham or other Authorities.

**33. Concern over ‘who decides who goes where?’ was frequently expressed.** This was asked by parent and staff groups alike but most noticeably in groups associated with special schools. An extreme level of anxiety and anger was expressed by some parents who told us that they believed that the bases would be inappropriate for their own child and for others like them, and that they feared that the children concerned may no longer be eligible for a place at a special school in the future.

**34. A significant number of participants and respondents have expressed anxieties about whether under the new arrangements children and their parents would have choice about whether to opt for a special school or a place in a resource base for their children.** We believe that this in part is created by their interpretation of the principle that ‘every child who can should go to a mainstream school’ and the proposed increased focus of special schools on young people with a higher incidence of need. In short, they said that they believe that young people with a lower incidence of need will have no choice but to go to a resource base if they decide to remain in borough. Some even said that they had been told this by the Director for Children and Young People. Concerns about lack of choice were perhaps most strongly voiced in relation to the proposal to phase out primary provision at Brent Knoll and many parents said that there would be no choice for children like theirs if Brent Knoll Primary is phased out.

**35. Many stakeholders said in engagements that they would feel more reassured about the appropriateness of the new resource bases if they could see some evidence of their success.** If so, was it measured transparently and impartially by a third party, advocating a longer lead in time for implantation and trialling or piloting of solutions. Evidence that the proposed arrangements worked in other authorities was also welcomed as a means of reassuring parents, staff and other stakeholders, including the ability to talk with their counterparts and peers already using similar resources.

**36. Although many advocated pilots, parents often didn’t want their own child to be part of the pilot** and thought this should be an option available for those parents who wanted the bases. We would suggest that this type of concern about transformation is echoed throughout the country and is particularly prevalent in the culture of BSF educational ‘transformation’; staff, learners and parents need to be assured that the present generation of learners will not become acceptable casualties in achieving the big picture goals.

**37. New arrangements would need to be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of all children.** There was considerable discussion amongst respondents and participants of focus groups about the wide spectrum of impairment amongst learning disabled students and its unique impact on the individual. So the ability of the new arrangements to be sufficiently flexible to meet all children’s needs has been a strong theme throughout as has been who decides what the ‘cut off point’ is for learners to be placed in special schools. In the absence of definitive answers to questions about who would be eligible for one type of placement over another, we observed a general tendency to assume that either the complexity of issues had not been understood by the Authority or worse that a more sinister policy of placing children in arrangements that could be afforded rather than where they really need to go.

38. **In summary, a significant proportion of concerns appear to stem from an uncertainty about a future state which is new and untested for most of the respondents and participants.** As a consequence, respondents would like these concerns allayed by the introduction and transparent publication about the change process once decisions about whether to proceed with each of the proposals have been reached. Facilitating contact with others who have either been through the process or who currently use similar resource base arrangements seems an important element of any change programme. Stakeholders would also be more reassured if the success criteria of the resource bases is set out and preferably in partnership with them so that early success can be monitored.

39. **Resources bases have some strong advocates amongst stakeholders.** Despite all the concerns raised by stakeholders about resource bases, there were several participants in focus groups who were strong advocates of those currently in place and a general satisfaction with the blend of specialist input and contact with the mainstream mix of the school population was expressed. Several parents told us that their child was thriving under such arrangements in Lewisham schools and that this was absolutely the right place for them. There was a general level of enthusiasm amongst parents of younger children about the ability to enable their child to learn in an environment which more closely matched the society in which they will later live. One parent said ‘you cannot wrap them up in cotton wool, regardless of your desire to protect them. We made a conscious decision that our children would go to a mainstream school to reduce the adjustment that they need to make later and to teach them to overcome barriers earlier rather than later’. There was some shift in perspective throughout the period of engagement from parents who began with a fixed position that resource bases were unworkable and inappropriate and later said that they could see that the bases could be valuable for some children, although these parents still had a residual fear that resource bases will ultimately cause the reduction of places at special schools and perhaps will be used as a justification for a greater reduction in years to come.

40. **There has been considerable debate both in face-to-face focus groups and articulated in written responses about the availability of multi-disciplinary support within the proposed resource bases.** This appears to be an issue that concerns learners, staff, parents and even the professionals who provide such services. In particular the current local shortage of therapists which does mirror the national picture was described as a significant concern and there is considerable and widespread enthusiasm for a vision which includes a step change in this type of specialist provision, though this is evenly matched by cynicism amongst stakeholders that these staff could neither be afforded or secured.

41. The PCT expressed a strong desire to dramatically increase the extent to which joint planning takes place at a strategic level between themselves and the Children and Young People’s Directorate, although It is likely there will be no additional funding injection from the health service.

#### **Views about the proposed increase in provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and other complex needs in other schools**

42. **A significantly higher proportion of stakeholders are in favour of these proposals than those who are not.** Over three quarters of parents with children in mainstream schools agree with the proposals and over half those from each of the other parents categories also agree, including parents with children at special schools. Teaching staff and other professionals have also indicated agreement by a significant majority. Nevertheless, there has been a high degree of opposition expressed by some specific groups and anxiety in a much broader range of others about what this proposal means in practice. As is the case with other questions in the proposals, a significant percentage of respondents who agree with increasing provision express reservations or attach caveats to their responses.

43. **Again, respondents confined their responses to their own situation rather than the general proposal.** A characteristic of responses to this proposal for restructuring three special schools is that respondents who are parents with children at specific schools and staff of the individual schools affected generally confine their comments to the schools or services with which they are associated with rather than commenting on the total proposal, and perhaps those proposed changes which would directly impact on them themselves.

44. It is also characteristic of responses to these proposals that many respondents who agree with them focus their comments on the need to address unmet needs and lack of in-borough places of children with ASD rather than the needs of children who currently attend the schools affected.

45. **Whilst there is general consensus that more places are required for learners with ASD and other complex needs, there is considerably less consensus about the way in which those places should be provided.** A significant number of respondents express a belief that there should be a new school for these children and that existing places at the current schools should not be altered to accommodate them.

46. As is indicated in responses to the proposals for introducing mainstream bases, responses to this proposal also frequently state a need for respondents to better understand the nature of the children that would attend the special schools in the future and an associated unease that the impact on the children currently attending the schools is less clear than respondents would like.

47. **The PCT and CAMHS express concern that children with Complex needs and ASD are very different groups but are being considered together within the proposals.** They express a concern about frail/delicate complex needs children being placed in the same provision as children who may have challenging behaviour. They state that there will be a need to address appropriate respite care needs for both these groups of children.

48. **The Health response also states that they think there is a serious under-estimation of the numbers of children and young people within the ASD spectrum.** They suggest that the provision will have wide-reaching impact across all agencies in meeting needs, for example local respite service, and that there should be an adequately resourced service to diagnose, provide interventions and give support to families locally. They suggest that immediate discussions are required to ascertain what sort of multi-agency resources will be required to meet the holistic needs of children and young people with ASD and state that Outreach teams from ASD provision will be required to be flexible to enable the meeting of needs during acute phases of their lives.

49. **The CAHMS and the PCT combined response questions whether the ASD provision will be able to meet the needs of adolescent pupils with very severe challenging behaviours** and suggest that implementing the proposals will require appropriate respite provision locally to support children and young people to remain at home in borough, and particularly for those with challenging behaviours. They state that the dedicated resource locally would increase the need for mental health services.

50. **They further state that keeping children and young people with a diagnosis of ASD in Lewisham would require additional CAMHS resource** to assess needs, manage medication and provide ongoing support to the child, family and also education staff. In addition the state that the proposed provision will have a significant impact on health resources as these C&YP require holistic care, provided by all agencies including Mental Health, Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy. They state that there is currently no educational psychology input into the ASD service.

51. **There is no clear response to the proposed amalgamation of Meadowgate and Pendragon schools.** Amongst those in favour of the amalgamation of Meadowgate and Pendragon schools in a new all-through school are a significant percentage of parents with children at Meadowgate but a much lower number of parents with children at Pendragon. The number of written responses from parents at both schools is much lower than we had anticipated given the strength of feelings in opposition to the proposals at focus groups.

52. **Health professionals and some mainstream schools expressed their support of the proposed all-through school** stating that the new arrangement would enable a better consolidation of resources, far better transition planning between primary and secondary provision and consistency for the children attending.

53. **In their focus group, Meadowgate children also expressed a desire to have the secondary school closer to them and said that they liked this idea.** It meant that they would not lose relationships with their teachers or the school, that they would have people they knew and trusted if things went wrong and that they could return to ask for support and to visit their friends more easily. However when asked about whether the secondary element should be immediately next to the primary or slightly separated, they were less certain, with many wanting a clear physical separation between the two. Pendragon students by contrast were unanimously opposed to the all-through school saying that they would not like the children from the other school and that they would not get on. They also said that there would not be sufficient room on the Pendragon site to accommodate more children.

54. **A significant number of responses show that respondents believe that the number of places proposed for the new school is less than the combined number currently provided** by Meadowgate and Pendragon and therefore state that they consider the proposal will bring about a loss of places rather than a gain as the consultation paper suggests.

55. **In addition many respondents' comments and those expressed during the engagement period suggested that they felt that the proposals amount to closure of the special schools .** Several parents, unions and staff from the special schools quote Lord Adonis' comments: ' when local authorities reorganise their provision for children with SEN they don't close special schools without first demonstrating that the replacement provision will be an improvement on what went before' suggesting that no evidence has been provided that the proposed arrangements will improve upon what is currently provided is in place.

56. **There is a very strong sense amongst learners at both Pendragon and Meadowgate that the services that they currently receive are those that they both want and need.** Learners from each school very favourably contrasted their experiences at their special school with those of a mainstream school; 'we are a family, we understand each other and help each other – no-one is different here'. We were concerned that despite clear group organisation and preparation for our session by students from Pendragon, they appeared to believe strongly as a group that their school was going to close and expressed high levels of anxiety about this prospect. We have some concerns that the perpetuation of this notion has contributed to the strength of opposition where it has been expressed to date.

**57. Concerns about the suitability of the existing Pendragon site are expressed throughout the written responses and became a recurrent topic of discussion in both parent and staff sessions.** Staff at Pendragon expressed specific concerns that moving their site would mean that many of the lower paid staff who they said they felt bring an important level of expertise would not be able to travel to a new site and that they would have to leave their jobs instead, causing a destabilising effect.

**58. There are very few instances where respondents have commented on the proposal to add a post-16 provision at Brent Knoll but those who do comment are in favour of providing such a provision.**

**59. Parents recognise the need to reorganise the special schools estate but there remains a high level of anxiety.** Whilst a high level of anxiety about the proposals to re-organise the special school estate was expressed by parents with children at the special schools concerned, there was also a widespread agreement that the number of children and young people with a higher and more complex level of need is increasing and that places are not available in borough to enable them to learn locally. Meadowgate, and to a lesser extent Pendragon, fully acknowledged that the numbers of children with Autism with a much higher level of need that they teach are already increasing and that they are likely to continue to rise. Meadowgate governors and staff from all three schools stated that they have already begun to take children with a much higher level of need and there are varying degrees to which respondents infer a level of disingenuousness on the Authority's part in consulting on a change that they say has already taken place.

**60. Parents concerned about whether all-through school will have enough places to cater for the two client groups.** The views expressed are generally not resistant to this gradual shift in the balance of client group though both schools express concerns about whether the numbers of places within the total population of the proposed all-through school will be adequate to cater for the numbers of children with this level of need.

**61. A concern expressed amongst respondents and focus group participants is that the increasing focus of special schools on intake of learners with higher levels of need will impact their ability to take young people with a lower incidence of need and the ability of mainstream schools to cater for these learners.** This concern is rooted in their experience of their own school populations having a high number of children who have 'been failed' by the mainstream schools. The extent to which they believe that these children have been wrongly placed in the first instance, and who should always have been in a special school is not entirely clear. However all three special schools that we spoke to had significant anxieties about the ability of mainstream schools to appropriately cater for the students who did not have the higher incidence of need in both the short and the medium term.

**62. Staff from Meadowgate and Pendragon schools are concerned about the move to an all-through arrangement.** Meadowgate and Pendragon say that they have developed an increasingly close working relationship with each other in recent years as Meadowgate is the natural feeder school for Pendragon. Staff team from each expressed considerable concerns about moving to a new culture within an all-through arrangement if the consequence of this is that they lose the excellence in provision and their own balance that it has taken such a long time to establish.

**63. Both schools asked questions about their own training if they are to have a significantly raised profile as expert resources within the Authority.** We would concur that many of these staff are likely to have such high levels of skill that on more generalist courses they may in fact know more than their trainers so 'master class' and high level training will need to be arranged for them so that they can maintain their skills levels.

**64. Concerns about the proposed amalgamation of the two schools focus heavily on the safety of younger learners.** For learners from Meadowgate, the prospect of being bullied by much older children was of primary concern to them, though there is no evidence to suggest that students with Autism are any more likely to bully their peers than those in mainstream. Several Meadowgate students expressed anxieties about moving to Pendragon and as might be expected, this is particularly noticeable for year six learners who are typically anxious about transition.

**65. Staff from both schools expressed concerns about the personal safety of young people and were united in saying that they would prefer a clear physical separation of the primary and secondary facilities to minimise potentially dangerous incidents, but for these staff, the issue is more one of the low levels of empathy and understanding of danger that is prevalent in Autistic children than one of bullying by older Autistic children.**

**66. In addition to the formal consultation responses, Meadowgate parents faxed through their own response sheets to the Mayor (see 3.1.6) that seem to indicate that they have had their own meeting to debate the proposed amalgamation.** From a total of sixteen responses, six are in favour of amalgamation and ten oppose the proposal.

## **Brent Knoll**

67. **A very large number of responses from mainstream primary school staff, other professionals and parents with children attending Brent Knoll express praise for the school.** There is particular praise for the primary provision and for the outreach services that the school provides. Amongst written responses and in focus group discussions there has been consistent and very strong opposition to the phasing out of the primary provision at the school and this is expressed in a balanced way by stakeholders from different groups. Parents whose children attend Brent Knoll primary provision have been extremely vocal in their opposition to the proposals despite assurances from the Authority that their own child / children would not be affected. They say that their concerns are as much to do with the high level of satisfaction they have of the present service as with their concerns about their children's previous experiences of mainstream and that they remain entirely unconvinced that a resource base in a mainstream setting could provide an equivalent high level of service.

68. **In reference to Lord Adonis' statement quoted earlier, they were keen to discuss how a resource base would be an improvement above the special school provision that is currently available.** Concerns were also raised about the scale of change required to successfully embed a culture of inclusion and to set up effective resource bases. Timescales are as much a factor in this as anything else, and they wanted to know whether change needed to happen as fast as is proposed, preferring that resource bases are successfully established before the primary provision is taken away. Governors have expressed their anger that the consultation comes after the phasing out of the primary service has begun. It is true that the consultation paper covers changes that are already in place and those that are new.

69. **Brent Knoll staff, like other special school staff, re-enforced their belief that a special school place is precisely the right environment for some children** and made the point that their outreach and training service has its most powerful impact when mainstream staff can observe teaching taking place, advocating that some primary provision remains in the school. The school's collaboration with mainstream schools and alignment of the curriculum with that of mainstream was observed by mainstream primary staff to be extremely positive for young people.

There is less commentary about the proposed 6th form though we believe from the feedback we have received that this is generally welcomed and seen as a positive addition to the school.

70. **Like other special school staff, the Brent Knoll staff had anxieties about their future roles, including their job security.**

71. **A very high level of praise for all three of the special schools concerned was continuously communicated by parents with children attending those schools.** Indeed, this was reinforced by the students themselves. However, we had the impression that a number of children had been placed in special schools less because it was the right place for them and that their placement had been a positive choice than that mainstream schools could not accommodate their needs. This was re-enforced by comments from some stakeholders. One young person who spoke English as a second language told us 'when I was at mainstream, I couldn't read or write – I learnt that here because they have helped me'. We wondered whether whilst laudable, that this was any more the role of a special school than a mainstream school and whether it was perhaps a factor of smaller classes and more one-to-one attention. Another learner told us 'I couldn't do the work and my teacher slammed the book on my desk shouting 'just do it' – I ran out crying and didn't want to go back. There are clearly a number of issues here but it seems that the culture of personalised learning and flexibility of service that is clearly reflected in all the special schools in question is one that should be adopted by mainstream and whether in fact when the solution to such incidents continues to be to transfer the young person to a special school place rather than address poor training, support and understanding, whether the culture in mainstream schools will ever be forced to change.

### **Views about the proposals for governance arrangements for the Hospital Education Service**

72. **Within both focus groups and through written feedback, most stakeholders said that they had inadequate knowledge of the service to express a view.** In fact, with the exception of the focus group held with the Hospital Outreach Service itself, none of the focus group participants offered a view about the governance options.

73. **Those who answered the question tended to be directly employed by or closely connected with the HES.** Of those who have answered the question in written responses, there are a high number of stakeholders who are either staff from the Hospital Education Service itself or health professionals and organisations with a direct knowledge of, and perhaps regular contact with the service, as well as a learner. This is the only learner who has completed a written response within the consultation.

74. **These stakeholders unanimously and strongly state a preference for the service to be managed independently of Abbey Manor College as a Pupil Referral Unit.** The reasons they provide are as follows:



- a) The young people have entirely different needs from those of the young people attending Abbey Manor College;
- b) The specialist nature of the service is better promoted with greater management autonomy;
- c) The mental health needs of many of the Hospital Outreach Service users, which include acute anxiety and depression, may be adversely impacted upon if greater collaboration and contact with students from Abbey Manor College, many of whom have behavioural difficulties, were to result from a single management structure;
- d) The needs of the learners may be subsumed by those of the PRU student in strategic planning and funding decisions;
- e) The wholly vocational curriculum followed by the College's students may not be appropriate for those of the Hospital Service, some of whom are more skilled academically;
- f) Separate registration would meet DCSF best practice guidelines, and
- g) The service has thrived and grown since its management changed from the PRU to Brent Knoll.

Whilst very few other stakeholders expressed a view, those who did have also expressed a preference for the service to be managed independently. Whilst there are less specific views articulated that support this preference, where they are expressed they broadly align with those above. The most common reason given for this preference is the difference in needs of the children in the different groups.

**75. Staff from the service itself stated clearly in their focus group that they wish to be self managing and independent of Abbey Manor College.** One of the reasons for this is that their own client group have very different needs and characteristics to those of the young people attending Abbey Manor or John Evelyn; in fact their view is that the high levels of anxiety associated with their own client group's mental health conditions make the two groups of students entirely incompatible. This should be considered in relation to perhaps the clearest argument in favour of bringing the service under the governance structure of the PRU which is the ability to extend the vocational offer it has embedded to the Hospital Education Services students.

**76. The Hospital Outreach Staff and their close associates state that the service's students are not necessarily suited to a vocational educational offering above an academic one.** Staff perceive that having their own governance arrangements will enable them to legitimise their function and build their profile within the borough, providing in the future a higher level of preventative work and earlier intervention. They fear that by being managed by the PRU will lead to their needs being subsumed within an agenda and an approach that differs from their own.

**77.** Whilst the PRU Management Board have made a direct offer to take on the governance of the service, staff from the service stated that they had recently received a communication from John Evelyn setting out reasons that they could not provide a suitable environment of service for the one student they thought might benefit from learning within the PRU.

**Appendix 3****Consultation document****Proposals for improving the education of children with special educational needs in Lewisham****Contents**

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## ***Introduction***

In Lewisham we aim to do the best for every child. This means making sure they are able to gain all the knowledge and skills they need to become confident adults who are good members of their local communities and able to play their part in society.

For children with special educational needs, our main principles are:

- (i) that they should be able to go to a school in Lewisham and
- (ii) that as many children as possible can go for all or part of their learning to ordinary (mainstream) schools, so that they can learn and play alongside other children with a range of abilities and backgrounds.

Many do that already, and some of the children in special schools spend a day or more a week in mainstream schools. However, too many children have to go out of Lewisham to a special school, especially when they reach secondary age. This is particularly true for the growing number of children with autism and other complex difficulties.

There is much good practice in Lewisham. We have some staff in mainstream schools very skilled at working with children with special educational needs (SEN), and our special schools offer various levels of 'outreach', support to the mainstream schools, to help them to work well with children with SEN. Some special school teachers see pupils in the mainstream and give advice to their staff. One particular special school, New Woodlands, which teaches children with emotional and behaviour difficulties, runs the borough's support service for that type of need, and takes some mainstream children on a short term place, which helps them to be more successful when they go back to their mainstream school.

There are also things we need to improve. We have to provide more places for children with autism in schools in Lewisham. We need to move on from a position where the options for a child are either just a special school or just a mainstream school. We need all our special schools to become the local authority service for their particular specialism, providing support for staff in mainstream schools and more flexible types of placement for children with particular kinds of SEN.

There are many successful models in the country of 'specialist resource bases'. These are specially funded bases in mainstream schools for children with a particular type of need. In these the school employs specialist staff and the children with that special need are taught for part of the time in the base and for part of the time with specialist support in mainstream classes. The results of OFSTED research in 2006 "Inclusion: Does it Matter Where Pupils are Taught?" demonstrate the value of this approach.

The proposals are intended to increase the number of specialist places offered in the borough and any redistribution of costs will maintain the total level of expenditure on special educational needs provision in mainstream schools, in specialist resource bases and in special schools. No child currently attending a special school affected by a proposed change will be expected to move unless the parents and the school, working through the usual Annual Review process consider a move or other change to be in the child's best interests.

Lewisham will benefit over the next few years from national finance in a programme called "Building Schools for the Future". We intend to make use of this to help us to redevelop some of our special school provision, as well as for the proposed changes in secondary schools noted below.

## ***This consultation***

The proposals in this document were presented to Mayor and Cabinet on 10 January 2007. The Mayor agreed to formal consultation being undertaken in the period from February to May 2007. The outcome is intended to lead to the development of specialist provision within

the borough to enable children<sup>1</sup> with special needs to have the best possible learning opportunities as well as to equip them with the skills to take them successfully into adulthood.

The period of consultation will run from 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2007. The Authority will hold a number of events with people from key groups concerned with children with SEN during the months of March and April. In addition, there will be a public event on April 23<sup>rd</sup> (see page 78) and another for professionals on a date to be arranged. We intend that all those with an interest in the development of specialist provision should have an opportunity to ensure that their views are heard. Attached to this document is a consultation response form to enable you to submit your comments in writing. The consultation process will be led for us by the Place Group, which is a commercial consultancy independent of the Authority. They will analyse and report to the Authority the responses to the consultation.

## **Summary**

The proposals on which we would like your views are:

- Increasing the ability of mainstream schools to teach and support children with SEN better and more flexibly, with, for example, greater input from specialist teachers;
- Building on our own experience and nationally recognised good practice by setting up several new specialist resource bases in mainstream schools;
- Making changes to some special schools to have better local provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and other complex needs.

We are also using the opportunity of this consultation to seek views on changes to the management of the Hospital Education service.

The proposals in this document mean that there will continue to be special schools within Lewisham but there will be some changes in the way they are organised to ensure that the provision available within the borough matches the needs of the children the borough serves.

The proposals aim to ensure more children will be educated successfully in mainstream schools with specialist resources. They also aim to reduce both the number of children who, on transfer to secondary school, leave mainstream to go into special school, and the number who have to go to a special school outside the borough. By strengthening the links between mainstream and special schools we would also expect to gain the flexibility of placement referred to in the introduction.

### ***Current Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs***

There are currently 6 special schools and both secondary and primary Pupil Referral Resource bases (PRU) in Lewisham providing a range of provision.

- **Watergate School** – 75 places for boys and girls aged 4-11 years. This school caters largely for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) including pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Watergate School is the primary feeder school for Greenvale School for many pupils. This is a new, purpose built school.
- **Greenvale School** – 83 places for boys and girls aged 11-19 years with SLD including (PMLD). This is the secondary school for many primary pupils transferring from Watergate School. Its new building next to Forster Park School is planned for completion in August 2007 and it will eventually offer 100 places.
- **Meadowgate School** – 70 places for boys and girls aged 4-11 years of age with learning difficulties. This school has in the past catered largely for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and associated needs. Over the past three years Meadowgate has changed its provision so that it can meet the needs of children with

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<sup>1</sup> In this document “children” means children and young people.

more complex needs including children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). It has developed some excellent practice. Recent development has done much to restore parental confidence in in-borough ASD specialist provision and reduce the pressure for primary out-borough placements. The buildings are in poor condition.

- **Pendragon School** – 123 places for boys and girls aged 11-16 years with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) which has usually taken most of the children from Meadowgate School and some from mainstream primary schools. The school has specialist school status for Humanities. Pendragon has adapted the building to make some good provision for pupils with autism who transferred from Meadowgate School in September 2005 and September 2006, but more places are needed at secondary level. It would be hard to continue adapting the building to include further groups of pupils with ASD.
- **Brent Knoll** – 128 places for boys and girls aged 4-16 years with mixed needs. The buildings consist of new build attached to more traditional 1960s buildings. The secondary provision is cramped for the needs of the students who are there. The primary children usually all transfer to the secondary department. Originally designated for “delicate” children, it now takes children with language and communication disorders, including a significant number with autistic spectrum disorder, others with emotional difficulties and a small number with severe physical or medical needs.
- **New Woodlands** – 40 primary places plus 12 in a primary aged Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). This is a primary school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a major building project being undertaken at the school, due for completion by September 2007. This will extend it to cater for a further 48 pupils in Key Stage 3 of whom up to 24 may have statements. Others will be there for short-term intervention. The school provides an extensive behaviour support service across Lewisham and this will be increased in Key Stage 3 once the current building work is completed.

The above schools all have some teaching staff who are equipped with advanced skills, and provide some support to mainstream schools within the borough.

- **Abbey Manor College** – situated on two campuses under one Executive Headteacher, this is registered as a Pupil Referral Unit for up to 160 secondary pupils. It makes provision for children who are at risk of exclusion or have been excluded from school. At Key Stage 4 there is an exciting vocational curriculum with strong progression routes into Lewisham College. It will also take on to this programme at Key Stage 4 those young people from New Woodlands who have continuing needs for support related to their difficult behaviour and social interaction. It has a key role in Lewisham’s 14-19 Strategy. The Broadoak Campus has been refurbished so that the vocational subjects can be properly taught. The John Evelyn site is in need of development.
- **Lewisham Hospital Education Service** - The service provides education for children with physical or mental health needs. It deals with approximately 600 children and young people a year; the majority are short stay admissions in the hospital and there is a smaller number of long stay and recurrent admission pupils. Teaching is in the Hospital Schoolroom, for in-patients, or via a home tuition service (minimum 5hrs per week) for those who are away from school for a long period with a diagnosed medical condition. In addition, for those in Key Stage 4 with referrals from the mental health service and who are not attending school, a provision of 1:1 or small group teaching is made for between 5 and 10 hours a week, now at the Old Schoolhouse next to Lee Manor Primary School. The service is currently managed by Brent Knoll School.

There are already some recently developed specialist resource bases in mainstream schools in Lewisham.

- **Deptford Green** - provides 25 places for children with Specific Learning Difficulties/Dyslexia. Placement is made through the SEN Panel for children with and without statements from anywhere in the Borough. The resource base will be redeveloped under Building Schools for the Future.
- **Coopers Lane Primary** – has a unit providing a Total Communication approach for 12 children with Hearing Impairment who need to access the curriculum through signing.
- **Kilmorie Primary** – provides 10 places for children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. There are plans to develop Kilmorie further, in the second stage of the Children's Centre<sup>2</sup> programme

In addition, the longer established resource bases in **Sedgehill** (secondary) and **Rushey Green** (Primary), for children with Hearing Impairment, will be redeveloped as the schools are rebuilt. At present the unit at Sedgehill is set up for those who use their residual hearing and lip reading (an oral/aural approach). Under the proposals changes will be required to ensure the resource base meets the local need. It will offer a Total Communication approach, which includes the need for signing.

As part of the school's normal admissions process **Sydenham** takes a small number of girls with visual impairment. Similarly, **Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College** takes around 5 pupils a year who have an autistic spectrum disorder.

### ***Reasons for change***

A large number of pupils with a statement are currently placed in schools outside Lewisham, reflecting a lack of provision within the borough. It is not in the best interests of children that so many are placed outside their home communities. A significant number of children are placed in these schools because they have behaviour difficulties or autism. The opening of the secondary provision for children with behaviour difficulties at New Woodlands in September 2007 will help meet demand but provision for pupils with autism remains inadequate. An opportunity is provided through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme to make physical changes to secondary buildings to match the provision we wish to make.

The particular gap in provision for children with autistic spectrum disorders is linked to a steady increase in the number of children diagnosed with ASD. In 2005, 458 children 0-16 were diagnosed as having an autistic spectrum disorder; this figure increased to 551 children 0-16 in 2006<sup>3</sup>. This puts great demands on our existing schools. The national picture of provision for such children has been described as poor (HMSO Report 2006)<sup>4</sup>. The Government is determined to improve how children with autism are taught. While the increasing prevalence of ASD means that there will be children in almost all Lewisham schools with this need, it is essential that there is also some specialist provision.

There is a relatively high proportion of children with statements of SEN in Lewisham, compared with neighbouring Boroughs and nationally. The number of pupils with a statement in Lewisham has reduced slightly in recent years from 1668 in 2004 to 1531 in 2006 (shown in the table below) but this is still a high level compared to most Inner London Boroughs. Where the process of acquiring a statement is seen by schools and parents simply as a way to gaining additional resources, the time taken and associated bureaucracy are not helpful to schools. The numbers of statements in other Authorities are lower partly because they have delegated more funding to schools to support pupils after early identification of their SEN. This means that at present statements are being given to some children in Lewisham who

<sup>2</sup> A Children's Centre would offer multi-agency services to young children and their families – that means help from the Health Service, from education and children's social services, and voluntary groups.

<sup>3</sup> Figures by Gill Stephenson & Tony O'Sullivan, Communications Clinic, February 2006

<sup>4</sup> House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (HMSO) Special Educational Needs, Third Report of Session 2005-06

would not have them in other boroughs. Lewisham will be delegating additional resources to schools from April 2007.

### Placement of Lewisham children with statements of SEN

	2004	2005	2006
Maintained Special	625	626	637
Non-Maintained Special	52	59	60
Independent	31	38	30
<b>Total in special schools</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>727</b>
<b>Total in Mainstream</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>804</b>
<b>Total number of statements</b>	<b>1668</b>	<b>1571</b>	<b>1531</b>

All those in independent and non-maintained special schools (about 90 each year) are educated outside of Lewisham borough, as are a further 120 children attending special schools maintained by a local authority outside Lewisham. The proportion of children placed in special schools as a result of new statements is reducing but despite this that proportion remains high when compared with national figures.

Special schools in Lewisham have all been assessed over the last 18 months by OFSTED as being of high quality. They are popular schools and all places are usually filled. However, the profile of some of the children currently on roll at Brent Knoll and Pendragon Schools is similar to children who elsewhere in the country would be in mainstream schools. Some parents within Lewisham have had poor experiences of their child's needs being met in mainstream schools and have a strong mistrust of mainstream schools' ability to cater for their children's needs. This indicates a clear need to increase the effectiveness of mainstream provision alongside the other proposals in this report.

The role of special schools in supporting mainstream schools to improve their provision is key. Through the intervention support of New Woodlands school, mainstream schools are now more able to work effectively with children who have challenging behaviour. This has led to a noticeable decrease in the requests for statutory assessment of primary age children with challenging behaviour since this support started.

### Projections of numbers of pupils with statements for 2006-2015

The projections are developed recognising that in future it is the pupils with higher levels of need who will acquire a statement of SEN and for whom additional funding will be identified by the Authority. We have begun to provide additional finance to all schools, linked to the historical level in the authority of statements for lower levels of need. This finance will be part of that considered as normal school resources and this approach will align Lewisham with other Authorities. We have developed a methodology, based on 2005/06 numbers of new statements completed and on the expected population increase, for projecting the consequent demand for statements over the next 10 years as shown in the following table. While no projection can be certain the figures provide sufficient guidance for planning ahead.

Age Group	2006/07			2010/11			2015/16		
	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19	3-11	11-16	16-19
<b>Main Need<sup>5</sup></b> (see footnote)									
<b>ASD</b>	143	77	10	150	120	16	149	140	27
<b>BESD</b>	67	178	15	21	121	31	20	57	21
<b>HI</b>	19	28	2	13	21	6	10	21	3
<b>MLD</b>	68	214	28	33	80	36	26	38	12
<b>MSI</b>	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0

<sup>5</sup> ASD-Autism Spectrum Disorder ; BESD-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty ; HI-Hearing Impairment ; MLD-Moderate Learning Difficulty ; MSI-Multi-Sensory Impairment ; PD-Physical Difficulty ; PMLD-Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty ; SLCN -Speech, Language and Communication Need ; SLD-Severe Learning Difficulty ; SpLD-Specific Learning Difficulty ; VI-Visual Impairment.

<b>PD</b>	30	28	5	27	32	6	30	26	5
<b>PMLD</b>	13	14	6	17	10	5	21	8	5
<b>SLCN</b>	96	95	11	42	96	17	23	40	10
<b>SLD</b>	87	71	27	63	89	42	61	61	58
<b>SPLD</b>	42	145	11	10	52	20	4	15	7
<b>VI</b>	12	6	2	10	9	2	9	9	2
<b>Age Group</b>	578	856	117	387	630	181	353	416	150
<b>Year Totals</b>	<b>1551</b>			<b>1198</b>			<b>919</b>		

## **Lewisham's Principles**

The following principles, set out briefly in the introduction, underpin Lewisham's approach:

- Every child who can be should be educated in a mainstream school;
- Support, training and resources should be provided to ensure that mainstream schools are confident and able to provide children with special needs with a high quality education;
- All special schools have an outreach function, to support and help to develop what mainstream schools offer.
- Children in special schools should have some opportunity, according to their needs, to learn alongside those in mainstream schools;
- Children and young people should be educated locally wherever possible;
- There needs to be a strong partnership between the Authority and parents; this requires good services and information;
- Resources from out-borough placements should be re-directed into mainstream schools;
- Early recognition of a child's needs and early intervention are vital. We will ensure funding is available at an earlier stage, not just through a statement;
- An efficient service for statutory assessment should be maintained for those children who still need it.

## ***Policy Context***

Lewisham's Children and Young People's Plan (2006) sets out our vision for improving outcomes for all children. It includes the need to improve outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities by ensuring that their needs are identified earlier and that more effective ways of meeting needs are developed. This is consistent with the Government's 10 year strategy "Removing Barriers to Achievement" which sets out five key objectives:

- Build capacity in the children's workforce to enable them to identify and meet children's needs
- Promote a continuum of local provision from mainstream through to specialist provision.
- Improve accountability for the outcomes children achieve
- Strengthen partnerships with parents and children
- Improve provision for children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties and children with Autism.

## ***The strategy for improvement***

A key theme in this strategy is to move away from simplistic arguments about the placement of children in special or mainstream schools. Some have argued that there is a conflict between the school improvement and inclusion agenda. Helping children with SEN to achieve is fundamental to sustaining improvements in schools' performance. The OFSTED Report (2006) confirmed that as mainstream schools become more inclusive they are more successful at raising attainment for every child.



For many children with special educational needs the way the curriculum, teaching and learning are organised can be barriers to their learning. Our approach to improving outcomes for all children is to remove barriers to learning and to be more flexible so that teaching can more closely match their learning styles. Personalised learning is high on the national agenda. To support this, the Authority will:

- identify a suitable special or mainstream school to give support to others on developing personalised approaches;
- ensure that the National Strategies have a sufficient focus locally on SEN;
- introduce a system of “provision mapping” so that schools can evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches;
- develop models of good practice for working in multi-disciplinary teams. For example, our Behaviour Educational Support Team (BEST) includes education psychology and child mental health workers. The recently opened Lewisham Centre for Children and Young People (Kaleidoscope) has been developed expressly to further such working;
- encourage schools to keep under review their arrangements for SEN and provide support and challenge when concerns are raised;
- improve the Authority’s arrangements for monitoring schools’ performance in meeting the needs of children with SEN.

The delegation of additional funding to mainstream schools which will become fully operational from April 2007 will provide further capacity in mainstream schools to meet the needs of children with SEN. Delegation of resources to collaborative groups of schools will enable them to commission a wider range of services to support children.

### ***The proposals in more detail***

Much of the recent debate on SEN has focused on the single issue of where children are taught. These proposals attempt to shift the focus away from this single issue towards the quality of children’s experiences and how they are helped to make progress with their learning and participate fully in activities of their school and community. The proposals increase overall specialist places for children. Specialist places demand specialist staff and it is those specialist staff which OFSTED evidence shows makes the real difference to pupils with SEN. Those in good specialist resource bases in mainstream schools are shown to make particularly progress (OFSTED Report 2006)<sup>6</sup>. This Authority’s proposals continue to expand on such provision.

#### **(i) Increased and more clearly financed training and support for mainstream schools.**

In mainstream schools the Authority will:

- increase the training of the staff who lead the work for children with SEN. There will be an expansion of the current programme, using national training materials to develop expertise in ‘early intervention’, and we will increase the skills of the leaders in this area to train other staff.
- train staff so that they have greater skills and confidence to help children with SEN. Through in-school and other locally provided courses both teachers and assistants will increase their knowledge and understanding, to work with children with autistic spectrum disorders, and those with communication difficulties.
- provide advice and guidance through the network of specialist resource bases and special schools.
- help staff to share across the borough methods which are successful. This will be linked to the increased collaboration between schools and opportunities for staff to visit successful provision.

These proposals build upon the good quality provision we have in our special schools, building on the strengths of each school. We would encourage schools to consider how best to work together, in collaboratives and federations, to bring new possibilities in leadership

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<sup>6</sup> Ofsted Report 2006 - Inclusion: Does it matter where pupils are taught?

and management, curriculum development and personalisation of learning. The key features expected of our special schools in supporting all children with SEN are that they will:

- provide advice across Lewisham for individual children with specific needs regardless of their placement
- provide training and other specialist guidance across all settings – mainstream schools, early years settings and Children’s Centres
- provide support to these settings so that children’s needs are assessed and met in a timely way while they are still young
- offer short term respite and assessment placements
- support children back into mainstream school from short or longer term special school placements.

**(ii) Formation of Specialist Resource Bases in Mainstream Schools**

We propose to build on our own experience and nationally recognised good practice by setting up several new specialist resource bases in mainstream schools. These function as alternatives to separate special schools. They provide opportunities, depending on the type and extent of a child’s special needs, for children to link into the activities and learning of mainstream classes as appropriate: maybe for tutorial time, maybe for one or more areas of the curriculum. Practice demonstrates that this can both increase and decrease over time depending on the child’s development. Pupils with statements showing a high level of a specific need would be identified by the Authority as suitable for these resource bases, while the schools in which they are established will appoint staff with particular skills and expertise in such work. In some cases additional building will be required. Each of the schools has been picked out or put themselves forward because they already work effectively with some children with the specific type of special educational need. The specialist resource bases will have specialisms around autism, communication, medical needs, and more general difficulties in learning. They will increase the opportunities for children with SEN to remain within their own local school communities

In primary schools the proposed new bases would be at:

- John Ball Primary – 16 places for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Tidemill Primary – 16 places for Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Perrymount Primary – 16 places for Complex Physical and Medical Needs
- Forster Park Primary – 16 places for children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

In secondary schools they would be at:

- Catford High – 35 places for children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
- Addey and Stanhope – 25 places for Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Bonus Pastor – 25 places for children with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

It is intended that the number of pupils using the special provision will increase gradually up to the number of places listed. The following table shows the overall position of the Authority’s specially resourced provision by 2011 if the current and proposed mainstream resource base provision is put together with the academy links.

School	Difficulty	Places
Coopers Lane	Hearing Impairment – Total Communication	12
Forster Park	Learning Difficulty and Disability	16
John Ball	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	16
Kilmorie	Learning Difficulty and Disability	10
Perrymount	Complex medical & physical	16
Rushey Green	Hearing Impairment – Oral/Aural	12
Tidemill	Speech Language & Communication	16
Addey & Stanhope	Speech Language & Communication	25
Bonus Pastor	Learning Difficulty and Disability	25
Catford High	Learning Difficulty and Disability	35
Deptford Green	Specific Learning Difficulty (dyslexia)	25
Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	25
Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy	Partnership with Greenvale school	Number to be finalised
New School (intended for 2010)	Learning Difficulty and Disability	20
Sedgehill	Hearing Impairment – Oral/Aural & Total Communication	25
Sydenham	Visual Impairment	6

**(iii) Changes to some special schools to improve provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and other Complex Needs**

**Meadowgate and Pendragon**

There is no specific local special school for children with ASD, therefore parental choice is limited. There are children with profound levels of need in each year group at Meadowgate due to transfer to secondary provision in September 2007 and beyond.

Whilst both Meadowgate and Pendragon schools have endeavoured to utilise the existing provision, their current accommodation requires substantial modification in order to meet the needs of those pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Therefore the Local Authority proposes:

- creating a newly built school for 120 pupils between the ages of 5 and 19 formed from the amalgamation of Meadowgate and Pendragon schools under one governing body and one Headteacher
- supporting it to develop strong partnerships with mainstream schools, particularly those with the designated resource bases, thus resulting in greater flexibility of placements
- helping it also to form strong links with Children's Centres, particularly those in Ladywell and at Downderry, so that they are supported in making early provision for children with complex needs and autism.

The vision for this new school is that it will

- reduce the need for pupils with autism to need to go out of the borough for their schooling;
- offer highly specialist provision developing from the much adapted curriculum now successfully in place and continuing to develop at both Pendragon and Meadowgate schools;
- take the lead in supporting mainstream schools to develop inclusive practice.

**Brent Knoll**

Given the continuing rise in numbers of young people with complex difficulties, including those with language and communication needs, changes are also proposed for Brent Knoll

School. The development of mainstream provision, and in particular the implementation of specialist resource bases in mainstream schools, means that some changes are needed at this school. While the quality of its existing primary age provision is recognised, the needs of such children can be met in well-provided specialist resource bases in mainstream schools. This will free up space at Brent Knoll to cater for children with more complex needs.

For some of the young people with complex communication difficulties leaving Brent Knoll at 16 it is difficult to find suitable further education provision. As Brent Knoll takes children with more complex needs it will become even harder and the benefits of a tailored curriculum in the school for some of this group, linked to that of other local schools and colleges, will be clear.

There is a continuing requirement for secondary places for children with a range of communication and emotional needs with associated learning difficulties, as well as further places for children with autism whose additional cognitive difficulties are not so great. Until all of the secondary school refurbishment is complete there will be an interim need for places for children with physical and acute medical needs. The Local Authority therefore proposes to adapt the provision at Brent Knoll School by:

- redesignating the school for children with complex and enduring learning needs;
- extending the age range up to 19, while phasing out the primary age group as alternative specialist resource bases are developed in mainstream schools;
- defining more clearly the intake as children with language and communication disorder and autism; very significant emotional needs; and severe physical/medical needs;
- reducing the number of pupils at the school to 84 as the primary phase decreases, so that it can better provide for children with more complex needs.

The vision for Brent Knoll is that it will:

- cater for the most complex needs in these areas so that children do not have to be placed outside of the borough;
- provide places for those children who need some intervention before moving on to mainstream, and provide respite and assessment places along with support for children and schools to take children on dual placements;
- offer highly specialist provision developing from the school's current adapted secondary curriculum;
- create the highest expectations of children so that they do have opportunities to be in a mainstream environment, with an expectation of pupils moving between special school and mainstream. We will use annual reviews of statements to consider the scope for a dual placement or transition to mainstream school;
- take the lead in supporting mainstream secondary schools to develop inclusive practice;
- share the expertise in the sector by becoming a Specialist School in the field of communication and interaction.

The proposal to increase the age range of the school to 19 strengthens the desire that Brent Knoll should work collaboratively with other schools. It will not be possible for the school to deliver the new 14-19 curriculum on its own. In particular, given the proximity of Brent Knoll and Forest Hill schools, and the fact that Forest Hill caters for a substantial number of boys with statements in areas of Brent Knoll's specialism, opportunities for pupils in both schools would be enhanced by linked curriculum development.

The proposed new school and Brent Knoll, like all of our special schools and the specialist resource bases, would provide an outreach service to support children regardless of their placement, delivered through guidance to teachers, training and flexible placements.

#### **(iv) Changes to the Hospital Education Service, providing for Children with Medical Needs**

Lewisham's Hospital Education Service is managed by a Head of Service under the auspices of the Headteacher of Brent Knoll School. At present the funding of the service has been

devolved to the governors of Brent Knoll but this does not provide a satisfactory legal status for the service. A recent review of the service recommended that the Authority reconsider its status. It is proposed that

EITHER

- this service is managed by the Executive Headteacher and Management Board of Abbey Manor College

OR

- we seek to register this service as a separate Pupil Referral Unit.

The management of the Service by the Executive Headteacher and Management Board of Abbey Manor College would allow it to benefit from existing management structures and professional development regimes, to explore synergies and to pool some resources. In some Authorities the Hospital Education Service is linked to another Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Young people under the Hospital Education Service could benefit from aspects of vocational curriculum provision which would not be feasible in a separate unit.

Should the provision be registered as a separate Pupil Referral Unit it would enable the service to develop in a more independent way, and to take account of the particular needs of this group of pupils, which are arguably not the same as those of pupils in other types of PRU. DfES guidance states that good practice is for PRUs providing for pupils with medical needs to cater exclusively for them. This is reflected in guidance from professionals in health services. A mainstream curriculum is important to many of those in the Hospital Education Service to ease reintegration to a mainstream school.

### ***Other specialist provision***

#### **Provision for children with Severe Learning Difficulties and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties**

The severe and complex needs of this group will continue to require special provision. However, there will be greater opportunities for children to gain access to mainstream. Watergate currently has excellent partnership arrangements with mainstream primary schools and depending on the needs of the child there are part-time placements into their local primary school. There will be a special partnership arrangement between Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy and Greenvale; the rebuilding of the latter will mean that the schools are quite close together. Planning is already taking place between the two schools that will enable Greenvale students to spend some of their time at the mainstream school. Watergate and the new Greenvale schools provide excellent "fit-for purpose" accommodation. The proposal is to build on the work that has already begun and to develop a federation between the two schools which will mean that there will be a shared governing body committee and an Executive Headteacher of the two schools.

#### **Provision for Children with Challenging Behaviour**

Our strategy recognises that some children are more difficult to include than others – typically because they present challenging behaviour. The current and future roles of New Woodlands School and Abbey Manor College are detailed on page 69.

### ***Time scales***

Should the proposals under which we are consulting be agreed, we would start to implement most of the new arrangements from September 2008.

With regards to the proposed new school, it will be necessary to seek such establishment under a "competition" arrangement. There is, however some scope for the Authority with the Secretary of State's consent to seek such establishment without such a process.

As part of this consultation exercise the Authority wishes to establish whether any organisations or individuals are interested in running the new school. An expression of interest from interested parties should be submitted to the address on the response form at the end of this document.

### ***Workforce Development***

Many of these proposals will require training for staff which builds on their existing skills and experience. All those schools being identified to have adapted provision have experience in working with similar children and some skills among the staff. Under the proposals all staff in each school will have professional development which helps them to understand the key needs of the pupils and the range of approaches to learning which are likely to be most effective. Each school will also have one or more teachers, together with support staff, who have undertaken specialist training for the needs they are meeting and who will be in a position to guide others. This will be supplemented by on-going training from the appropriate special school.

### ***Finance***

The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme makes provision for addressing the capital renewal needs for secondary specialist provision, including Brent Knoll and the proposed rebuilding of Pendragon and Meadowgate as a single school for the 5 - 19 age group. Further funding will be allocated through the government organisation "Partnership for Schools" for the primary element.

Some capital costs are being identified. Some of the work necessary for the resource base at Perrymount has already taken place. The new provision at Tidemill is an integral part of the specification for the rebuilding of that school. The resources at John Ball and in the South Quadrant need to be provided, by additional building and/or by adapting existing space. Provision of resourced bases at Catford High, Bonus Pastor and Addey and Stanhope Schools will be within the BSF programme.

There is no intention through these proposals to reduce the overall sum committed to SEN provision. The out of borough placements are a significant cost at present, especially for residential provision, if it is given because there is no suitable school closer, and for daily transport. While the new provision in-borough will be funded to a good level there will be financial savings to be made which will be returned to the overall schools budget to support children with SEN.

### ***Responses to this consultation***

Place Group will be organising a range of meetings for focus groups attended also by officers of the Authority. The public consultation event will take place on **23rd April between 3pm and 8pm in the Council Chamber at the Civic Suite.**

Your response to the consultation should be sent by **7<sup>th</sup> May 2007**, preferably on the forms from this document to:

Freepost RRHS-ALLE-TUEE  
SEN Consultation  
London Borough of Lewisham  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Laurence House  
1 Catford Road  
London  
SE6 4RU

This paper can be downloaded from:  
[www.lewisham.gov.uk/educationandlearning](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/educationandlearning)

Should you wish to do so, you can email your response to:  
[sen.consultation@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:sen.consultation@lewisham.gov.uk)

If you have any queries about the content of this document please contact Ray Harris, School Improvement Officer, on 020 8314 8599.

Those requiring information in a language other than English, or for other formats, including Braille, large print, audio tape or computer disc should contact Tony Vera-Cruz, telephone: 020 8314 9062





**Response Forms**

Freepost RRHS-ALLE-TUEE  
SEN Consultation  
London Borough of Lewisham  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Laurence House  
1 Catford Road  
London SE6 4RU

**NAME** .....

**ADDRESS** .....

.....

**POSTCODE** .....

**I am representing an organisation in making this response**   
(please tick and specify)

**NAME OF ORGANISATION** .....

**OR**

**I am making this response in my private capacity** (please tick)

**How would you best describe yourself in relation to this consultation?**  
(please tick one option)

<b>Parent/carer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>School governor</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Member of school staff</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Pupil/student</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Member of local community</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....	

**Does your child attend**

<b>Early Years Centre</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Private pre-school provision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Portage</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Mainstream school</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Special school</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mainstream school in a specialist resource base</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>No provision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Does your child attend a school in Lewisham?** Yes  No

**What is the name of the school your child attends?**  
.....

**What Year is your child in?** .....

**Do you have a child who has a statement of special educational needs ?** Yes  No

1	<b>Is the existing school provision within Lewisham for children with SEN as you would like it?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Reasons</b>	

2	<b>Do you agree with Lewisham's principles for special educational needs provision (see page 72)?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Reasons</b>	

<b>3</b>	<b>Do you agree with the proposal for improving mainstream provision, which includes developing the outreach role of special schools?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Reasons</b>	

<b>4a</b>	<b>Do you agree that we should extend provision by setting up specialist resource bases in primary schools?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Reasons</b>	

<b>4b</b>	<b>Do you want to make a specific comment about any of the schools below in relation to the proposals?</b> <b>(if so, please tick the box by the school you are referring to.)</b>	
	John Ball	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Tidemill	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Perrymount	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Forster Park	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>5a</b>	<b>Do you agree that we should extend provision by setting up specialist resource bases in secondary schools?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Reasons</b>	

<b>5b</b>	<b>Do you want to make a specific comment about any of the schools below in relation to the proposals?</b> <b>(if so, please tick the box by the school you are referring to.)</b>											
	<table> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 1106 638 1160">Catford High School</td> <td data-bbox="638 1106 1445 1160"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 1160 638 1214">Addey and Stanhope School</td> <td data-bbox="638 1160 1445 1214"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 1214 638 1267">Bonus Pastor</td> <td data-bbox="638 1214 1445 1267"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 1267 638 1321">Sedgehill</td> <td data-bbox="638 1267 1445 1321"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="188 1321 638 1375">H.A.Knights Academy</td> <td data-bbox="638 1321 1445 1375"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		Catford High School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Addey and Stanhope School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bonus Pastor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sedgehill	<input type="checkbox"/>	H.A.Knights Academy	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catford High School	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Addey and Stanhope School	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Bonus Pastor	<input type="checkbox"/>											
Sedgehill	<input type="checkbox"/>											
H.A.Knights Academy	<input type="checkbox"/>											

<b>6a</b>	<b>Do you agree with the proposals to increase provision for children with autistic spectrum disorders and other complex needs in special schools?</b>	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Reasons</b>	

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<b>6b</b>	<b>Do you want to make a specific comment about any of the schools below in terms of the proposals we are consulting on? (if so, please tick the box by the area of which you are referring to.)</b>	
	Changing Brent Knoll to a school for children aged 11-19	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Re-designating Brent Knoll School to cater for pupils with complex needs	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Amalgamation of Meadowgate School and Pendragon School to form a school for children with ASD aged 5-19	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7</b>	<b>Do you think that the Hospital Education Service should be: (please tick one option)</b>	
	<b>a) managed by the Executive Headteacher and management board of Abbey Manor College</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>b) registered as a separate Pupil Referral Unit</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>c) No view</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Reasons</b>	

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<b>8</b>	<b>Do you have any other comments on the proposals?</b>
	<b>Please write comments below</b>



## About You

This section is to help us develop policy and services which respond to your needs.

### Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

### Please select your age group

- Under 18 years of age
- 18-34 years of age
- 35-59 years of age
- over 60 years of age

### Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present?

- Employee in full-time job (30 hours plus per week)
- Employee in part-time job (under 30 hours per week)
- Self-employed full or part-time
- On a government supported training programme (e.g. Modern Apprenticeship / Training for Work)
- Full-time education at school, college or university
- Unemployed and available for work
- Permanently sick / disabled
- Wholly retired from work
- Looking after the home
- Other (please specify)

### If you are disabled, would you describe your impairments as? (tick all that apply)

- Visual
- Speech



- Hearing
- Mobility (a wheelchair user)
- Mobility (not a wheelchair user)
- Learning disability
- Mental health
- Hidden impairment
- Other (please specify)

**To which of these groups do you consider you belong?**

- White - British
- White - Irish
- Mixed - White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White & Black African
- Mixed - White & Asian
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Black or Black British - Caribbean
- Black or Black British - African
- Chinese
- Other (please specify)

**Data Protection Act 1998**

The data collected will be subject to the Data Protection Act 1998. This information will be held on computer and will remain confidential. It will not identify you in any form and it will not be disclosed to any third parties without your consent. The data will be processed for statistical purposes only and will only be used in a form that does not allow you or any other member of your household to be identified. By returning a completed questionnaire you are giving your explicit consent for the data collected about you to be recorded and used for the purposes above. Under the Data Protection Act, you have the right to a copy of the data held about you by the London Borough of Lewisham.

## Appendix 4

### Accommodation Options

#### 1. Key Factors

Before considering the various site options it is important to set out the four determining factors behind the feasibility work carried out thus far. These are:

- (a) Current standards and best practice
- (b) Site constraints and opportunities
- (c) Affordability
- (d) Deliverability

#### 2. Site options and evaluation for new ASD School (120 places)

The evaluation and feasibility work has centred on the commitment to build a new ASD school for 120 places. Officers have looked at both refurbishment and remodelling of both Pendragon and Brent Knoll, and in doing so also visited maintained and independent special schools recommended by the National Autistic Society and DCSF. This experience, and the factors set out in Sections 12.11 – 12.15 above demonstrated that refurbishment of existing premises would not be the best way to provide appropriately for pupils with ASD, who benefit from buildings designed for their needs.

Four sites were considered for the provision of the new ASD school.

- (a) Leahurst Road (Ennersdale)
- (b) Meadowgate
- (c) Brent Knoll
- (d) Pendragon

##### A) Leahurst Road

Leahurst Road was considered unsuitable as the site for the new ASD facility for the reason that the current building has recently been refurbished and is in use as a decent facility for Northbrook School. In addition while the building is a strong one and is robust for continuing education use, it would be less than ideal for the specific and special needs of an all through ASD facility. As is set out below it is considered again as an alternative provision for an 84 place Brent Knoll facility.

##### B) Meadowgate

Meadowgate was not considered for the new ASD facility as it is considered too small to provide both the buildings needed and acceptably size play facilities.

##### C) Brent Knoll Site

An option for the new build for the ASD school on the current Brent Knoll site was also considered (in a scenario in which the site would be vacant). The advantage of this option would be to enable the newly built school to be developed on a cleared site. However the drawbacks of this option are twofold. Firstly a 120 place ASD school built in accordance with BB77 requires a gross floor area of 4700m<sup>2</sup> plus suitable external recreation areas. The size of the Brent Knoll site is only 4895m<sup>2</sup> and would not be of sufficient size to allow for acceptable external space. Secondly the only option for housing pupils during the rebuild would be at Leahurst Road, which given its current temporary use for Northbrook decent would not be available until September 2010. This would mean that any new build ASD school on the Brent Knoll site would not be available until December 2012.

##### D) Pendragon

Options for rebuilding the new ASD school on the Pendragon site were also considered. The site meets all the requirements set out in section 12 of the report, including BB77 while also allowing the flexibility of provision and play space required. Feasibility also indicates that the site will allow a rebuild to cater creatively for an all age school.

The two 1920s buildings comprising the existing school are in fair to good condition in respect of fabric and structural integrity but are not of any particular architectural merit. Rooms are generally on the small side (less than 45-50m<sup>2</sup> as compared to the 65m<sup>2</sup> required by BB77) and both buildings suffer from poor circulation due to narrow corridors and staircases. There is and will continue to be a maintenance liability from some original fabric such as windows, roof, etc. but they could remain in serviceable condition for the foreseeable future (20/25 years) against a proper Planned Maintenance schedule.

The location of the existing buildings tends to fragment the external play area and there is an appreciable amount of what could be construed to be wasted space, particularly on the northern and western boundaries. Also the middle play ground is in shadow for significant periods of the autumn and winter terms, which is not entirely satisfactory.

Any new development would seek to eliminate this fragmentation by locating the new build against the northern and eastern boundaries so creating a generous play area to the south that will not be in shadow at any time of the year. Current car parking provision, for staff and mini-bus(es), is about a dozen spaces and there may be a need to replicate this in any new development.

The current feasibility shows two and three storey accommodation with the Primary provision occupying the ground floor with shared facilities. More mature students in Secondary and Post 16 occupy 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors. It is considered that a three storey building is appropriate for the more mature SEN pupils as the building will be fully DDA compliant. The planning implications of a three storey building on the site are being addressed with LBL Planning although it is thought not to be a problem. It may be necessary to move the second and third storey parts of a block away from the eastern boundary to make the proposal more acceptable to adjacent dwellings.

The Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA) of the new build will be 2.07 times larger than the existing provision. One of the reasons for this is that BB77 standards are very generous compared with, say BB98 standards. For example the range of classroom size for 30 pupils in a BB98 scale school is from 56-60m<sup>2</sup>, whilst that for 6 – 8 SEN pupils is set at 65m<sup>2</sup>, virtually a four-fold occupancy density increase. Other functional areas within the school are similarly increased in size over above BB98 standards. General comparison between BB98 and BB77 “education area provision” shows that the former provides about 8m<sup>2</sup>/pupil and the latter 40m<sup>2</sup>/pupil, which is 5 times as much.

A total new build will enable a design that is fully compliant with the best current design and construction standards, i.e. there will be no compromises that necessarily arise from a refurbishment/conversion scheme. The current feasibility assumes sharing of common facilities such as plant space, catering, general office, reception, some circulation etc. for maximum economy and results in a GIFA of 4573m<sup>2</sup>. However if this configuration was not considered to be desirable for organisational/educational reasons then a solution predicated upon a complete functional and physical separation of Primary and Secondary provision has been reviewed but results in an increased GIFA of 5088m<sup>2</sup>. With regard to sustainable development an “Excellent” BREEAM rating will have to be achieved through a 100% new build and a minimum 20% contribution to on-site renewable energy will be provided; this would not be achievable in a part or full refurbishment of the existing buildings as energy performance will be dependent on building fabric not necessarily designed with energy saving in mind.

The external spaces are just as important as the internal spaces in a SEN school and the possibility of external ‘teaching gardens’ on the south of the building for Primary pupils is an attractive and very usable concept. Their immediate adjacency to generous external play areas, both formal and informal, will make pupil supervision by staff easy but unobtrusive. The space provided by such a school proposal is far less fragmented than the existing external areas and therefore subsequently deemed to be more usable.

The desirable drop-off and pick-up bays can be easily incorporated into the new design proposal from either Pendragon or Roundtable Roads. These could be within the schools secure fence line, or not, as the school desires.

The construction of the new school can be undertaken in a phased manner to negate the need for decant of pupils off-site. Whether this is desirable from a continuing education point of view would be for SEN specialists to say but there is a point of view that states the construction activity, however well managed or considered, will be a distraction or at least disturbing for some pupils. Technically though the phased construction is feasible and deliverable in the following manner:

- Erect a temporary boundary to screen off the existing car part and MUGA.
- Construct the three storey block on this site for some Primary, Secondary, and all of Post 16
- Decant some pupils into completed block and vacate existing 2-storey Block B, Existing Block A retained for some pupils
- Relocate temporary boundary to isolate existing Block B
- Demolish Block B and construct remaining 2-storey part of new build

- Complete construction of new Block B to make connection between new Blocks A & B during a school holiday
- Decant pupils into completed facility
- Relocate temporary boundary to isolate existing Block A
- Demolish existing Block A
- Complete external works and handover

Via the strategy above the new build scheme is considered deliverable. The lines of demarcation both physical and organisational are clear and discrete and the risk of one activity adversely influencing concurrent or future activities is low. However the overall construction duration will be extended (and cost increased) because of the need to conduct the demolition / build in an ultra-considerate manner.

Realistically, development of the design and construction of the new school can only begin once consultations have been completed. If these are complete by July 2008 the new school could be finished within a period from December 2010 and December 2011. Until more detailed work is carried out it is not possible to be any more precise at this stage.

If an off-site decant were preferable, the most likely current site would be the Leahurst Road site once vacated by Northbrook. This would allow the new school on the Pendragon site to be completed within a period of between eighteen and twenty four months.

### 3. Site Options and evaluation for Brent Knoll school (84 places)

#### A) Redevelopment of the Facility Brent Knoll Site

The main Brent Knoll School was built in 1960 and a new Music Room(s) annexe has been recently (2007) completed.

The construction is a mixture of different forms of construction ranging from, steel framed construction for the hall and some larger spaces, to in-situ concrete for some skeletal elements and floors, to an odd form of roof construction that consists of pre-cast concrete beams supporting wood-wool infill panels in the manner of beam-and-block floor. This makes future adaptation and conversion complex and risky (from a construction delivery perspective) as there is a need to correctly manage the interface between different materials that all have different performance and serviceability characteristics.

During feasibility it was clear that the structure has significant problems arising from the concrete roof slab being supported by load bearing masonry walls. While this inherent design fault is not critical, it is concluded that it does cause concern if the building were to be viewed as suitable for long term conversion for refurbishment. Put simply it would not represent value for money.

As a result officers considered the viability and deliverability of re-providing Brett Knoll on the Leahurst Road Site.

#### B) Redevelopment on the Leahurst Road Site

Ennersdale Primary School is an extremely robust, traditionally constructed building with a mainly Victorian provenance. Significant parts date back to 1892 but despite its age there is no indication of any structural distress or failure of integrity. In the recent past there has been pressure to Locally List the building although this has been resisted to date.

There is local failing of fabric, e.g. stone parapet copings, flashings, etc, but these items can be easily remedied, but in overall terms the building is in good condition. Subsequent to being raised to a fully refurbished and converted state it is considered that the effective life of the building will be 100 years and probably more given satisfactory future routine maintenance. The reason for this view is that the constituent materials of brick, natural slate, natural stone, and under-stressed reinforced concrete and wrought steel elements are inherently long-lived with only routine maintenance. Even joinery, albeit 'old-fashioned' is still sound and some of the single glazed external sash windows are original and over a 100 years old. In any refurbishment these would of course be replaced by more energy efficient designs. Generally the existing building is a very good basis for a 'new' SEN school.

Current enabling works for the Northbrook decant has introduced significant betterment to the building as a whole. The building has limited adaptability by virtue of its load bearing masonry /

riveted wrought steel construction although space provision is already well provided and distributed. Classroom sizes are generally good at around 55/60m<sup>2</sup> and could be utilised immediately with very little alteration. Overall the school provides usable space for 3600m<sup>2</sup> against BB77 requirement of 3178m<sup>2</sup> an overprovision of over 13%. Additionally the actual space provision (as opposed to the BB77 requirement) is 1.62 times larger than the existing Brent Knoll school. This latter feature affords space for additional intake at very little or no cost.

The individual floor plates of the school will, it is considered, provide a safe and secure environment for vulnerable pupils, and at the same time provide light and airy spaces because of the generous storey heights. The main problem with the building is the restricted vertical circulation due to narrow and inflexible staircases, although with the greatly reduced number of pupils (84 for Brent Knoll SEN as opposed to over 500 for the current Northbrook occupancy) this should not be a problem. The addition of lifts in strategic locations (for standard DDA compliance) will provide the necessary improvement in vertical circulation.

A minor point against the building form is the internal layout, combined with locations of staircases it is not necessarily intuitive in respect of way-finding for pupils of indeed staff new to the building. This could be much improved in even a limited scope conversion by sight line development, use of colour / lighting, and signage.

It is unlikely that a BREEM rating of better than "Very Good" can be achieved although the wholesale replacement of building services and improvement of external fabric proposed as an integral part of the refurbishment / conversion will significantly improve the "carbon footprint". However the retention of an existing building ticks lots of "sustainable development" boxes as the embodied energy for refurbishment and conversion is very significantly less than that expended in a new-build replacement; this also scores high BREEM points.

The school site is already enclosed by high masonry walls and as such provides a secure and safe environment for informal and formal play areas. Drop-off and pick-up points are slightly constrained by the fact that the bounding roads, Leahurst and Pascoe Road are one way in the same direction. A drive through for vehicles could be considered although this would use up valuable play space.

In summary therefore, the scope of the refurbishment and remodelling work to convert the Leahurst Road site to a school for Brent Knoll would include the following:

- Full review of area/room layouts and circulation to meet the needs of the pupils best
- Full review of external envelope and improvements to provide a 60 year life span
- Special allowance and consideration to the SEN teaching space and requirements such as improved compartmentalisation and sound transfer
- Upgrading and full renewal of M&E services to the building
- Full review and upgrade for DDA requirements and location of lift and ramps
- Improvements to the sustainability of the usage of energy
- Major upgrade to the internal finishes of decoration and flooring
- Introduction of new ICT provision to meet the needs of SEN teaching

#### 4. Summary and Conclusion

The feasibility work carried out as set out above has attempted to balance the primary objective of delivering high quality SEN facilities with budget and site constraints. It is the view of the Executive Director of Regeneration that the strategy will be best serviced by providing the new ASD facility on the Prendragon site, and re-providing the Brent Knoll school at Leahurst Road.

Should these recommendations be accepted by the Mayor further more detailed work will be carried out prior to detailed programme and project timescales being agreed.

## Appendix 5

The figures here show the number of places that will be available if the proposals are carried through, compared with the number provided in July 2007 in Lewisham special schools and specialist resources.

<b>Special schools</b>		
	July 07	Proposed
Brent Knoll	128	84
Greenvale	85	100
Meadowgate	70	
New Woodlands	48	72
Pendragon	125	
Watergate	80	86
New ASD school		120
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>462</b>
<b>Specialist resource bases</b>		
Addey & Stanhope		25
Bonus Pastor *		25
Catford High	7	35
Coopers Lane	8	8
Deptford Green	25	25
Forster Park		16
Holbeach *		16
John Ball		16
Kilmorie	5	10
New Secondary		20
Perrymount		16
Rushey Green	8	8
Sedgehill	25	27
Sydenham	6	6
Tidemill		16
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>OVERALL SPECIALIST PLACES</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>731</b>

The two further tables below show for the primary and secondary phases separately how the necessary additional places noted in section 7 of this report can be offered. In the primary phase the proposals provide 27 additional places, compared with a demonstrated requirement for 37. There is currently a significant number of pupils with similar high level needs successfully attending Lewisham mainstream schools, not in specialist resource bases (for example, 31 at present with a diagnosis on the autistic spectrum). It is reasonable to consider a small increase in that number through the next ten years. The proposed increase in local specialist places for the secondary phase will allow a substantial decrease in the number of pupils educated outside of the authority.

\* Conditional on Mayor's decision.

**Needs currently met at Brent Knoll Primary and Meadowgate, compared with proposed provision in 2015-16**

	2006-07		2015-16
Brent Knoll	48		
Meadowgate	70		54
Kilmore	5		10
Tidemill			16
Forster Park			16
John Ball			16
Perrymount			16
Holbeach			16
Watergate			6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123</b>		<b>150</b>

primary phase of a 5-19 school  
5 further places become available  
Conditional on Mayor's decision  
additional places for pupils with ASD  
increase of 27 in specialist places

**Needs currently met at Brent Knoll Secondary and Pendragon, compared with proposed provision in 2015-16**

	2006-07		2015-16
Brent Knoll	80		84
Pendragon	125		66
Addey & Stanhope			25
Catford High	7		35
Bonus Pastor			25
New Secondary			20
Greenvale			15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>212</b>		<b>270</b>

secondary phase of a 5-19 school  
Conditional on Mayor's decision  
increase in available places in new building for pupils with ASD  
increase of 58 in specialist places



## **Glossary of Terms**

AEN	Additional Educational Needs
APA	Annual Performance Assessment
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
BSED	Behaviour, Social & Emotional Difficulties
CAHMS	Child, Adolescent and Mental Health Service
DfES	Department for Education & Skills
EBD	Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties
ECM	Every Child Matters
HI	Hearing Impaired
LA	Local Authority
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PD	Physical Disability
PMLD	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SENDIST	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Tribunal
SI	Sensory Impaired
SLCN	Speech Language & Communication Need
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
VI	Visual Impairment

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