

<b>Mayor and Cabinet</b>			
<b>Report Title</b>	Response to Comments by the Children and Young People Select Committee on the Implementation of the Strengthening Specialist Provision Programme		
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	<b>Item No.</b>	
<b>Ward</b>	All		
<b>Contributors</b>	Children and Young People Select Committee		
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	<b>Date</b>	14 September 2011

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides a response, for consideration by the Mayor and Cabinet, to the comments and views expressed by the Children and Young People Select Committee, following discussions held on the officer report "Monitoring the Implementation of the Strengthening Specialist Provision Programme - ASD Provision and the new ASD school" at their meeting on 25 May 2011.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Mayor is recommended to approve the report and forward it to the Children and Young People Select Committee.

## **3. Policy context**

### **3.1 Local context**

Lewisham's Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's priorities of raising educational attainment and improving facilities for young people through partnership working. It also highlights the importance of better safeguarding and joined up services for children at risk. The Sustainable Communities Strategy emphasises narrowing the gap in outcomes, particularly in relation to education and employment.

- 3.2 The Children and Young People's Plan outlines the vision for improving outcomes for all children, and articulates the need to improve outcomes for children with SEN and disabilities by ensuring that their needs are met.

- 3.3 The local authority 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. In particular, it requires the LA to have regard to the need to ensure that special educational provision is made for pupils with SEN. Section 315 requires LAs to keep these arrangements under review.

### **3.4 National context**

The Government's SEN Green Paper focuses on ensuring there is a range of educational settings available to meet the needs of all children with SEN, and that parents are empowered to make choices about which of these is most suitable for their child.

#### **4. CYP Committee Views**

4.1 In 27 March, the Children and Young People Select Committee considered a report outlining the progress of the Strengthening Specialist Provision Programme since its initial implementation in 2007. On 25 May, the Committee considered a second report outlining further detail in relation to the supply of ASD places and possible options being explored for the use of the Meadowgate School site.

4.2 The Children and Young People Select Committee made the following comments about the report.

4.2.1 The Committee would like an assurance that it will be given adequate opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the report to be provided to the Mayor (provisionally in July), outlining proposals for the future use of the Meadowgate School site.

#### **Response**

Select Committee will have the opportunity on 8 September 2011 to comment on the report on options for the Meadowgate site before it goes to the Mayor and Cabinet meeting on 5 October 2011.

4.2.2 In the context of broader capacity and places planning issues in relation to the new ASD school (including those pupils with other primary SEN needs transferring to the new school from Pendragon and the existing Meadowgate school), and in recognition of the potential financial costs of adapting the Meadowgate site; the Committee has reservations about the proposed delegation of decisions regarding which pupils to accommodate at the Meadowgate site being devolved to the executive head teacher.

#### **Response**

If there is agreement to retain the Meadowgate site as an annexe of Drumbeat, decisions about which pupils will use the site will be a matter for the head teacher, in line with the Education (School Government) (Terms of Reference) (England) Regulations 2000 (R5(1)). The local authority will retain a key role in ensuring the most efficient use of resources.

4.2.3 The Committee notes that there is a duty on the authority to secure appropriate post 16 education for all those young people with SEN that require it, for three years rather than the two required in mainstream provision. With that, and the current pupil numbers in mind, the Committee feels that a provision of 10 places (from Easter 2013) at the new ASD school may not be sufficient, and the Committee would seek further reassurance that there is the capacity to secure appropriate post 16 provision for all young people with SEN that request it.

#### **Response**

The report on options for the use of the Meadowgate site deals with the shorter term issues relating to the accommodation of pupils already on the roll of Meadowgate and Pendragon. A further report to the Mayor and Cabinet will deal with longer term issues relating to the increase in the pupil population and the attendant increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and requiring specialist provision, including in resource bases. The report will include consideration of the likely need to increase post-16 places, at Drumbeat and elsewhere.

- 4.2.4 The Committee notes a concern about the broader capacity of the Strengthening Specialist Provision programme to provide sufficient SEN places, due to the projections of need for 2015-16 already having been exceeded in 2011-12.

### **Response**

As stated above, the report on options for the use of the Meadowgate site deals with the immediate issues relating to the accommodation of pupils already on roll of the two schools about to close. The further report to the Mayor and Cabinet will deal with the longer term issues associated with the increase in the pupil population and the consequent increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and requiring specialist provision.

- 4.2.5 The Committee wishes to note that although the single biggest group of “primary need” is ASD, that need makes up only a third of all children with SEN – there are twice as many children again with SEN who have other primary needs that also need to be met.

### **Response**

The 2007 report to Mayor and Cabinet ‘Strengthening Specialist Provision’ outlined proposals to improve provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, given the anticipated increase in the number of pupils with the condition. The profile of pupils in Meadowgate and Pendragon is significantly weighted to those with ASD and although borough-wide the majority of pupils with statements do not have ASD, the priority remains the enhancement of ASD provision. Other needs are currently well catered for in the existing range of special schools and resource bases, though naturally this will be kept under review.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising out of this report. The financial implications of any decisions about the Meadowgate site will be considered in due course.

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 The Constitution provides for Select Committees to refer reports to the Mayor and Cabinet, who are obliged to consider the report and the proposed response from the relevant Executive Director; and report back to the Committee within two months (not including recess).

## **7. Equalities Implications**

- 7.1 Pupils with special educational needs are among the most vulnerable in the community, and it is vital that provision made for them enables them to maximise their potential and takes into account the range and variety of their needs.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Strengthening Specialist Provision Programme – Officer Report to Children and Young People Select Committee (27.03.11)

Monitoring Implementation of the Strengthening Specialist Provision Programme: ASD Provision and the new ASD School - Officer Report to Children and Young People Select Committee (25.05.11)

Strengthening Specialist Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs – Officer Report to Mayor and Cabinet (03.10.07)

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