

Joint report of Strategic Director for Children, Young People & Families and Strategic Director for Resources

Pupil Reintegration Unit

Recommendation

The Schools Forum is recommended to:

- Endorse the change in methodology of allocating funding to Area Behaviour Partnerships but recognise this is as a result of specific circumstances relating to the process within this specific project.
- Agree that the funding originally earmarked for primary aged education at the PRU be reallocated to fund alternative provision approaches for primary aged children across the pilot areas and supporting services.

Introduction

1. Members of the Forum will recall, at its May meeting, consideration of the report outlining the financial strategy for the future use of centrally managed funding that supported the Pupil Reintegration Unit (PRU). This strategy proposed the allocation of funding to the Area Behaviour Partnerships (ABP) along with more responsibility to determine local solutions for those children who have been, or are at risk of, permanent exclusion. At that meeting, the Forum were consulted on and agreed to a preferred method of allocating agreed levels of funding to the ABPs.
2. Since the last report, the strategy around the future use of the PRU and the enhancement of ABP responsibilities has been formally implemented with the charging mechanism now in place for any exclusions to the PRU and the ABPs determining the best pathways for these children. This strategy also means that no primary aged children have been admitted to the PRU since March 2011, with pilot clusters or primary schools working together and with the Early Intervention Service to avoid permanent exclusion.
3. Also since the last report, Cabinet have considered and agreed to a report that recommended that consultation be undertaken as to the potential closure of the PRU on 31 August 2012.

Method of Allocation

4. As part of the development of the strategy to reduce the numbers of permanently excluded pupils across Warwickshire, a stakeholder group, which included the chair of each Area Behaviour Partnership, was established to consult on proposals to reach a mutually agreed way forward. This group was consulted at each stage of the process to develop and formulate options.
5. As part of this process, the original four options for allocating funding to ABPs were considered and agreed for consideration by the School Forum. These four options were:

- Free Schools Meals (average of last three years)
 - Additional Education Needs (average of last three years)
 - Per pupil
 - Per school
6. Between the agreement by the stakeholder group that confirmed the options and the date of the forum, further consultation with each of the ABPs had began and the Southern ABP had considered the four options prior to the report deadline. Feedback from this group proposed a fifth option, to allocate funds based on an average of the four initial options, and was subsequently added to the report for consideration. This fifth option was subsequently agreed.
7. While this was noted within the report to the Forum, wide concern regarding this decision was later raised by various headteachers across the County and these views of were expressed at the consultation group following the forum.
8. After careful consideration, it has been agreed that additional funding would be allocated to those areas that lost funding through this decision and the revised allocations for 2011/12 by area are:

Area	Amount Allocated £m
North	0.699
South	0.297
East	0.249
Central	0.359
Total	1.604

9. This decision was reached because of the unique nature of this particular project and the consultation route that was adopted throughout the process. Given the consultation group did not have the opportunity to consider the fifth option, and that other areas had not had the opportunity to respond to the options, it is believed this is a sensible and pragmatic approach.
10. While, under normal circumstances, consultation with the school forum would lead to a decision that would stand and be implemented, it is felt that in this instance there are mitigating circumstances that allows for a change to the proposal from the School Forum.
11. The increase of £0.104m in funding, compared to the original £1.500m will be funded through the contingency allocation for 2011/12.

Developments of Alternative Provision for Primary Children

12. Following the decision in December 2010 to no longer refer primary aged children into the PRU, efforts have been on-going to find alternative education placements for those children who were already educated in the PRU. All bar two primary age pupils were found placements by the end of the summer term 2011. The remaining

two pupils remained at the PRU whilst statutory assessment took place, with placements to be confirmed by October half term.

13. Alongside this, progress has been made, which has resulted in six pilot primary cluster areas where alternative provision opportunities are being developed between the Early Intervention Service in the Authority and the schools. These cluster areas are:

- Stockingford (8 schools)
- Atherstone (4 schools)
- Whitnash & Sydenham (13 schools)
- Rugby (5 schools)
- Bedworth 1 (5 schools)
- Bedworth 2 (7 schools)

14. These clusters were agreed as they are super output areas thereby being areas of deprivation that have highest risk of exclusion. It was agreed in principle at the May meeting that the existing budget historically earmarked for the primary element of the PRU (£0.405m) would continue to be allocated to alternative provision for primary aged children. As described above, the new model is a joint initiative between the six clusters and the Early Intervention Service proposed funding for these services is £0.040m per cluster, £0.240m in total. In support of the cluster work, the Early Intervention Service is providing services to establish partnership working, train primary schools in early intervention and facilitate interventions appropriate to the child. The cost of this service is £0.165m. Between March and July 2011, thirteen primary age pupils (either excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion) have been supported by Early Intervention Service. Twelve of the thirteen children are attending mainstream school again. One child has been identified as requiring specialist provision.

15. It has been agreed that this pilot approach will be adopted for two years with an evaluation carried out at the end.

16. Core council funding has been earmarked that is providing Early Intervention support, through managed moves, for areas of the County that are not part of the six cluster areas.

Conclusion

17. Following careful consideration after the May forum, it has been agreed to review the allocation methodology for issuing funding to Area Behaviour Partnerships .

18. Partnerships between six pilot clusters and the Early Intervention Service are working to implement alternative provision solutions across these super output area and it is proposed that the original budget for the Primary PRU be reallocated to support these initiatives.

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