

Portfolio Holder Decisions/Leader Decisions

Date: Thursday 27 April 2023
Time: 12.00 pm

Membership

Councillor Kam Kaur

Items on the agenda: -

1. Request to Consult - New Specialist Resourced Provision

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Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

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Portfolio Holder Decision Request to Consult - New Specialist Resourced Provision

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Education
Date of decision	27 April 2023
	Signed

1. Decision taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Education agrees to the commencement of a consultation for the establishment of Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) to cater for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at St Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School, in line with the statutory process required

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 In line with the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education, 'Making Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools', any proposals to establish, remove or alter SEN provision (including Resourced Provision) at a mainstream school requires the local authority to undertake a statutory process including a consultation period of at least 4 weeks.
- 2.2 The Local Authority are looking to establish specialist provision at St Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School: for up to 8 primary aged pupils with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) whose primary needs are communication and interaction. St Matthew's Bloxam C of E Primary School has been identified as having pupils with high need which an SRP could support whilst further supporting sufficiency in the area and the existing space that can be adapted for September 2023.
- 2.3 The proposed resourced provision will meet the needs of pupils with an education health care plan, who are cognitively able to access the curriculum and will benefit from being located alongside a mainstream school environment where their additional needs can be met through a flexible approach, tailored and adapted to their needs.
- 2.4 Admissions to the specialist resourced provision would follow a different process from that operating for the rest of the school. Admissions into specialist resourced provision will be considered by the WCC High Needs Panel which considers the admission of pupils into specialist provision. This will not impact on pupils who are in

the mainstream setting at the school.

- 2.5 The places at the SRP in Rugby are required to meet the demand for places for Specialist Provision in the local area for September 2023. Where sufficient local specialist places cannot be provided, pupils would need to be placed in provision out of the local area, potentially in more costly independent provision with additional transport costs.
- 2.6 If the proposal is approved by Cabinet, in order to ensure the capital works required to create the necessary accommodation for the provision are in place to accommodate the pupils, a consultation needs to take place in May 2023 to ensure the proposal can be presented to Cabinet in June 2023. The consultation would take place towards the end of the pre-election period. General legislative guidance highlights consultations during a pre election period should be avoided, unless a delay to a consultation would cause exceptional issues, such as meeting a statutory duty and in this case, the provision of school places in time for the start of the school year.

3. Background information

- 3.1 In order to meet forecast demand and build on the local offer of specialist provision the local authority is continuing the development of SRPs across the county whereby pupils, who are cognitively able to access the curriculum, can have their needs met and benefit from being located on site alongside a mainstream school environment. The main growth and investment continues to be in specialist provision for pupils with communication and interaction needs and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties
- 3.2 There are currently 12 SRPs attached to mainstream primary provision in Warwickshire – 2 in North Warwickshire, 3 in Nuneaton & Bedworth, 3 in Rugby, 1 in Warwick and 3 in the Stratford on Avon area.
- 3.3 If the proposal is agreed by Cabinet in June 2023, capital works would be initiated to ensure accommodation is in place to allow the SRP to open in September 2023.
- 3.4 In line with the timing of provision it is anticipated that the consultation to establish the SRP at St Matthew's Bloxam CofE Primary School would need to take place during May with a decision by Cabinet in June 2023. Parents at the schools will be consulted using the school's established form of communication, other schools and stakeholders will be notified of the proposal and further information will be placed on WCC consultation platform 'Ask Warwickshire'.
- 3.5 An Equality Impact Assessment would form part of the report that goes to Cabinet in June 2023.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no additional costs to the LA to undertake this consultation.
- 4.2 However, if after the consultation, there is a decision to go ahead with the specified resourced provision there will be capital costs to the Authority in order for additional teaching and ancillary space to be provided to accommodate the learners attending the resourced provision. Education capital funding would be used to fund the required capital works.
- 4.3 Initial feasibility work has indicated that the required accommodation can be achieved by remodelling and refurbishing existing space. This would be completed in time for opening in September 2023.
- 4.4 Pupil places in the resourced provisions are funded at a higher rate so that pupils additional learning needs can be met. The level of funding will be broadly in line with how pupils are funded in the County’s special schools. A service level agreement between WCC and the school will confirm the exact arrangements and expectations.
- 4.5 The establishment of resourced provision is part of the strategy to limit the overspend on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allowing learners to be placed in more cost-effective provision, and ensuring that, where possible, more learners with an EHCP can be taught alongside, and within, a mainstream school environment. The establishment of resourced provision across the county increases the range of SEND provision available to meet the needs of children, particularly those children with significant additional needs but able to access a mainstream curriculum.

5. Environmental implications

- 5.1 Anticipated to be minimal with the additional accommodation requirements involving small scale internal alterations.
- 5.2 There is also the positive impact with the increasing development of resourced provision aiming to provide more ‘local’ education provision and reduce journey times for the learner.

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Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kam Kaur

	Portfolio Holder for Education
Urgent matter?	<i>No</i>
Confidential or exempt?	<i>No</i>
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	<i>No</i>

List of background papers
None

Members and officers consulted and informed
Portfolio Holder – Councillor Kam Kaur
Corporate Board – Nigel Minns
Legal – Nic Vine and Guy Darvill
Finance – Brian Smith and Andrew Felton
Equality – Joanna Kemp
Democratic Services – Isabelle Moorhouse
Councillors – Councillors Dahmash, Brown and Roodhouse
Local Member(s): Cllr Barbara Brown