

For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET 15 JULY 2013
AGENDA ITEM:	10
SUBJECT:	Educational provision for pupils with challenging behaviour
LEAD OFFICER:	Paul Greenhalgh, Executive Director Children, Families and Learning
CABINET MEMBER:	Tim Pollard, Deputy Leader (Communications) and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning
WARDS:	'All'
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT: The recommendations address the Council's Corporate Plan priority to ensure a good start in life for children and young people by enhancing educational opportunities for pupils with challenging behaviour.	
FINANCIAL IMPACT There is no financial impact as a result of these recommendations.	
FORWARD PLAN KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: This is not a key decision. The proposals are for consultation purposes.	

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 In order to meet the requirements of the Raising of the Participation Age, to reconfigure specialist provision for pupils with challenging behaviour at Beckmead School to include vocational pathways and post-16 learning opportunities, making the most effective use of the capital investment agreed by Cabinet in July 2011 in new secondary provision on the Priory School Tennison Road site for this cohort.
- 1.2 To consult on strengthening the governance arrangements for the Victoria House Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for primary aged pupils by separating it from the PRU Federation and changing the accountability for the PRU to the governing body of Beckmead School; this would require the technical closure of the PRU and an expansion of pupil numbers at Beckmead school to incorporate the PRU provision.
- 1.3 To commence consultation in September 2013 on expanding Beckmead school to cover the new specialist provision proposed in 1.1 and the Victoria House PRU as proposed in 1.2 above.
- 1.4 Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member and Executive Director for Children, Families and Learning to consider the outcomes of the proposed consultation on the expansion of Beckmead school and proceed to formal consultation through the publication of statutory notices.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed in July 2011 the redevelopment of the Priory School Tennison Road site for additional provision (50 places) for secondary aged pupils with challenging behaviour / ASD. This report outlines a proposal for reconfiguring provision for pupils with challenging behaviour to ensure the most effective use of the capital to be invested in the Tennison Road site. The proposed reconfiguration delivers the additional 50 places and seeks to:
 - Build new learning pathways that meet the needs of both the ASD with challenging behaviour and BESD cohorts from key stage 1 through to post 16, increasing capacity to place pupils appropriately and enabling the Local Authority to meet the new statutory requirement to raise the participation age;
 - Develop new high quality vocational provision at Key Stage 4 and 5 to meet the needs of the BESD cohort and other pupils with challenging behaviour while focusing new provision for pupils with ASD / Challenging Behaviour on the Beckmead school site.
- 2.2 The report also outlines a proposal for reconfiguring primary provision for this cohort so that Croydon can offer a strategically managed continuum of

provision that addresses the increasing need for quality provision for children with challenging behaviour. The proposal to link Victoria House PRU to Beckmead school would support this objective and would also strengthen the governance of a unit, which will increasingly deliver short term interventions to prevent exclusion or assessment places for pupils with challenging behaviour.

- 2.3 These recommendations have no direct financial implications as the capital budget for the Tennison Road development was agreed by Cabinet in July 2011. Revenue funding for school places is allocated through the high needs block within the Dedicated Schools Grant. Some economies of scale can be expected in revenue budgets as a result of the proposals.

3. DETAILED PROPOSALS

Reconfiguration of Specialist Provision for Pupils with Challenging Behaviour at Beckmead School

- 3.1 The Cabinet report of July 2011 agreed a recommendation for a 50 place secondary provision as well as a 30 place primary provision to increase the number of places locally for this cohort and reduce the number of pupils placed outside the borough in the independent sector. The primary provision at Colby Court is nearing completion and is established as part of Beckmead school. There is now the opportunity to develop a strategic approach to the planning of provision for pupils with BESD and ASD under the leadership of Beckmead School and to address the statutory requirements in relation to the Raising of the Participation Age.

- 3.2 The following configuration of provision is proposed:

Beckmead - Colby Court site (30 places):

- 30 places (key stages 1 and 2) for pupils with ASD with challenging behaviour.

Beckmead - main site (84 places):

- 48 places (key stages 2 and 3) for pupils with BESD
- 36 places (key stages 3, 4 and 5) for pupils with ASD with challenging behaviour

New development on the Priory School Tennison Road site (50 places):

- 50 places (key stages 4 and 5) vocational provision for pupils with BESD (with additional part time places to be offered to pupils from mainstream and special schools).

- 3.3 The new primary provision at Colby Court is primarily focusing on the needs of children with ASD and challenging behaviour whilst primary children with BESD are based on the Beckmead site.
- 3.4 The proposal envisages cohorts of pupils with both BESD and ASD educated on the Beckmead site. This approach has been piloted over the past year with primary aged pupils with ASD taught temporarily on the main Beckmead site, while the new facilities are built at Colby Court. 'Zoning' of the school site and use of nurture provision has enabled the mix of children with BESD and ASD to be effectively managed. This reflects practice in other boroughs and in the

independent sector where a similar mix of pupils is common.

- 3.5 At key stages 4 and 5 the development of a vocational 'hub' on the Tennison Road site parallel to more academic courses would provide a broad and differentiated curriculum for pupils who are vulnerable to disengaging completely from education in mid to late adolescence.
- 3.6 The key benefits of the proposed reconfiguration of provision are set out below:
- Increased staff expertise within the borough in managing challenging behaviour including addressing social and emotional needs of pupils
 - Safe progression routes for pupils with challenging behaviour through to the end of Key Stage 4 and 5
 - Access to a vocational offer for a wider range of pupils with challenging behaviour /ASD.
 - A focus on personalised learning and practical vocational, courses as well as the core skills at key stages 4 and 5 to enhance pupils' employability
 - Provision for a growing cohort of girls with challenging behaviour at Key Stages 4 and 5
 - Expected reductions in the number of young people aged 16-19 not in education, employment or training (NEET)

Transfer of governance of Victoria House PRU to Beckmead School

- 3.7 Victoria House is a primary Pupil Referral Unit, which provides a small number of education places for pupils excluded from primary schools or requiring intensive intervention to enable them to engage effectively in learning. Its key focus is on working with schools to manage their most challenging pupils more effectively within their existing setting. Placements at the PRU are agreed with schools through the Primary Fair Access Panel and this collaborative practice has resulted in no permanent exclusions since spring 2012.
- 3.8 The provision was restructured in the summer of 2012 in order to strengthen the leadership of the PRU, improve the quality of teaching and learning and to refocus the Behaviour Support Team (*Primary Inclusion Team*) on building the capacity of schools. With new leadership since September there have been improvements to teaching and learning. The recent positive Ofsted inspection of Victoria House with an improved grading from the previous inspection places the provision in strong position to further develop their practice.
- 3.9 The governance of the PRU is currently through the Saffron Valley Federation, which comprises all 5 Pupil Referral Units in the borough and was established in 2012. Victoria House is the only primary PRU within the federation and does not benefit from joint initiatives such as the sharing of curriculum initiatives and staffing in the same way as the secondary PRUs. The previous experience, however, of a dedicated management committee for each PRU proved ineffective.
- 3.10 Small independent provisions of the size of Victoria House are vulnerable to changes in standards when leadership changes; being part of a federation or larger strategically managed provision enables greater resilience and continuity. There are examples of similar models of very successful partnerships between BESD special schools and PRU provision elsewhere. One of these is a BESD

special school and PRU provision for primary children in Bournemouth recently inspected in April under the new Ofsted framework and graded outstanding in all areas.

- 3.11 A further consideration is the need for Victoria House PRU to manage its budget to bring it closer in line with the unit costs of provision in the borough's secondary PRUs. It will be challenging for the PRU to achieve this without the economies of scale that the proposed collaboration would offer.
- 3.12 There may be a concern that this proposal will identify Victoria House as specialist provision. The proposal is for the identities of the PRU and the BESD / ASD provision at Beckmead to remain distinct; this will be reinforced by the PRU moving to its new site at Hazel Glen in Sanderstead. The benefits, however, include continuity of approach, greater flexibility in placing pupils with complex needs and a consequent ability to focus more strategically on early intervention.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 There has been initial in principle discussion with key stakeholders including the Beckmead Executive Head teacher, the head teacher of the PRU provision and the Chair of the Saffron Valley PRU Federation. Similar in principle discussion with the governing body of Beckmead school is scheduled for 1 July.
- 4.2 This report seeks agreement to commence consultation on the plans in September 2013. This will include consultation with staff and parents.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 There is already provision in the SEN capital budget for the development of the Tennison Road site.
- 5.2 The Victoria House PRU is funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant and they have been set a target to reduce costs by £0.2m in 2014/15, which this proposal will make easier to achieve.

Approved by: *Lisa Taylor*, Head of Finance CFL on behalf of the Director of Finance

6. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 6.1 The Solicitor to the Council comments that the local authority is under a general duty to ensure there are sufficient school places in their area.
- 6.2 Proposal for the closure of a Victoria House and the proposed expansion of Beckmead school must comply with the relevant school organisation regulations and the statutory process for consultation, publication of notices, representation and determination of the decision.
- 6.3 Additional requirements relating to proposals to establish or change provision for special education needs are prescribed in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools (England) Regulations 2007.

Approved by: Jacqueline Harris-Baker, head of social care and education law on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Director of Democratic and Legal Services

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 The development of new educational provision on the Tennison Road site will require the recruitment of additional specialist staff.
- 7.2 Staff transferring from Victoria House to Beckmead school would be subject to the protection of TUPE

Approved by: Atia Williams, HR Business Partner on behalf of the Director of Workforce, Equality and Community Relations.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 This proposal seeks to enhance provision for a vulnerable group of pupils with complex needs. The initial equalities impact assessment has not identified any negative or disproportionate impact
- 8.2 A full equalities impact assessment will be undertaken informed by the proposed consultation before any of the proposed changes are implemented.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 There is no environmental impact arising from this report.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 10.1 The development of post 16 curriculum provision for pupils with challenging behaviour should support the reduction of crime and disorder in the borough.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

- 11.1 The recommendations enable the Council to meet statutory requirements relating to raising the participation age and ensure that the benefits to the cohort of pupils with challenging behavior of the capital investment already agreed by Cabinet in July 2011 are maximized.
- 11.2 The proposal to change the governance arrangements for Victoria House PRU to link it to Beckmead School both strengthen the governance of the PRU and facilitate future economies of scale to reduce the unit cost of the PRU provision.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1 The management and governance of the planned new provision for pupils with challenging behavior on the Priory Tennison Road site could be addressed by seeking expressions of interest from an academy provider. However, the size of the provision (50 places) and the specialist nature of the provision would make it difficult to secure the quality of leadership required. This was previously the experience at Beckmead school (80 places) until the appointment of the current executive head teacher. The option was also rejected as it would not provide the strategic oversight of a range of learning pathways across all key stages that the recommendations in this report offer.

12.2 Victoria House PRU could continue to be governed through the Saffron Valley PRU federation. This is the current position and does not offer the specialist support and challenge on primary education issues that could be secured through a link to Beckmead school. The previous arrangement was a separate management committee for the Victoria House PRU, which proved to be difficult to attract governors to and was therefore extremely weak in its oversight of the school.

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Background Documents: none