

**REPORT TO:** Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016

**PRESENTED BY:** Divisional Manager – Inclusion

**PORTFOLIO:** Children, Young People & Families

**SUBJECT:** Update on the proposal to close Westfield Primary School Resource Provision Base for Pupils with Hearing Impairment and Specific Learning Difficulties

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report outlines the consultation process undertaken and the issues raised on the proposal to close Westfield Primary School Resource Provision Base for Pupils with Hearing Impairment and Specific Learning Difficulties.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 2.1 **The Board consider the response received from the first phase of the consultation;**
- 2.2 **The Board note the statutory consultation undertaken between 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In September 2016 there will be 3 pupils accessing the Resource Provision Base. All 3 pupils are in Key Stage 2, there are no pupils in Key Stage 1. Feedback from families of children in early years indicates that they would choose for their children to attend their local school with additional Teacher of the Deaf support in line with National Sensory Impaired Partnership (NatSIP) recommended support levels.
- 3.2 With the advances in technology and the right support most children now make greater progress by being a part of a mainstream peer group with language support. To ensure pupils have the right support the proposal seeks to close the Resource Base and reinvest the funding into increasing specialist support for pupils in local schools. Should there be a need for a specialist placement in future years a specialist place will be commissioned from a neighbouring Local Authority.
- 3.3 The Local Authority will continue to provide support to Westfield until the three pupils have completed their education at the school. Funding will be provided to support the two teaching assistants and the Local Authority Specialist

Teacher will continue to support the school in line with the NatSIP support levels.

#### **4.0 CONSULTATION**

4.1 The first phase of the consultation commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016 and closed on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016. Consultees included: parents at the school and the Resource Base, Governors, staff, all schools, pre-schools with Hearing Impaired pupils, Halton NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, the Chair of Halton Impart, Diocesan Authorities, neighbouring authorities, trade unions, the local MP and local Elected Members

4.2 A total of 14 responses were received to the consultation. Consultees were asked whether they supported the proposal, they were also given the opportunity to provide their comments.

4.3 The key issues raised during the consultation included the following:

- Support for the current pupils in the Hearing Impaired Base;
- Viability of current provision;
- Support for pupils should the base close;
- Progress of pupils with Hearing Impairment in a mainstream school;
- Cost cutting;
- Recruitment of Specialist Teachers of the Deaf
- Use of the facilities; and
- Support for other pupils with special needs in the school.

4.4 Appendix A details the questions and comments made in the first phase of the consultation with the responses to the issues raised.

#### **5.0 STATUTORY CONSULTATION**

5.1 Executive Board considered the responses made to the consultation along with the notes of the meeting with the staff and governors, parents and public. The Board then gave approval for a four week statutory consultation to be undertaken.

5.2 The statutory consultation commenced on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and closed on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The statutory consultation was sent to the following: Governors and staff at Westfield Primary, all headteachers of nursery, infant junior and primary schools, Brookfields and Chesnut Lodge Schools, pre-schools with Hearing Impaired pupils, Halton NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, the Chair of Halton Impart, Diocesan Authorities, neighbouring authorities, trade unions, the local MP and local Elected Members. A copy of the consultation document is attached at Appendix B.

5.3 As part of the consultation process two meetings were held at the school on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016; one for staff and governors and the second for parents and the public. A copy of the proposal and the reports submitted to Executive Board were provided to the Regional Director, North West for The

National Deaf Children's Society, along with the Equality Impact Assessment. The Regional Director and a colleague were also invited and attended the parents and public meeting at the school.

- 5.4 A summary of the responses received to the consultation will be collected and summarised as well as responses to any issues raised. A further report will then be prepared and submitted to Executive Board on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016, so that a decision on the proposal can be determined. If the proposal is approved no further pupils will be admitted to the base and it will close with effect from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Resource Base currently receives £10,000 for each of its 6 places giving it a total of £60,000. £20,623 is provided for a Signer each year and an additional £5,081.73 is allocated for each pupil placed in the base.
- 6.2 Funding will continue to be provided to Westfield Primary School to support the costs of the two teaching assistants until the three current pupils have completed their primary education at the school.
- 6.3 The funding from the unit will be reinvested into employing specialist staff to support pupils across the borough with Hearing Impairment. It will also be used to commission specialist provision if required.

## **7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 By increasing the peripatetic team support can be provided to more pupils with a hearing impairment.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **8.1 Children and Young People**

Supporting pupils with a hearing impairment in their mainstream local school is more inclusive as it allows pupils to be educated within their own community, alongside their siblings, friends and peer group.

### **. 8.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton**

N/A

### **8.3 A Healthy Halton**

N/A

### **8.4 A Safer Halton**

N/A

## **8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

N/A

## **9.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

9.1 As reducing number of parents are choosing to have their children educated in a HR Resource Base it is becoming more difficult for the base to be financially viable and to be able to recruit the appropriately qualified staff.

9.2 As the majority of families would prefer their child to be educated in a mainstream setting with support we may not be able to provide the appropriate level of support across the borough to meet need unless we can reinvest the resources saved from the closure of the Base.

## **10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

10.1 This proposal is aimed at ensuring pupils with Hearing Impairment can be educated within their own local community and is therefore more inclusive.

10.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on this proposal.

## **11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Documents</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Statutory Notice January 2010	Rutland House ann.mcintyre@halton.gov.uk	Ann McIntyre 0151 511 7332
Executive Board Report 14 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	as above	as above
Equality Impact Assessment	as above	as above