

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 27 MARCH 2014**

**PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES: REVIEW OF SEND PROVISION**

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: EDUCATION AND CORPORATE PARENTING**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER - CLLR PAUL WATLING**

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

To seek Cabinet approval to consult stakeholders on the possibility of providing post 16 educational facilities for students with severe and profound learning difficulties on the site of the Telford College of Arts and Technology and alter the upper age range of pupils attending The Bridge School.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 That the Assistant Director Education and Corporate Parenting be authorised to engage in formal consultation with key partners and stakeholders regarding the possible development of provision for post 16 learners with severe and profound special educational needs in partnership with the Telford College of Arts and Technology. There would also need to be consultation on the related proposal to alter the age range of The Bridge School so that it accepts pupils up to the age of 16 and ceases to make provision for 16 to 19 year olds.**

**2.2 That the Assistant Director Education and Corporate Parenting, in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, be given delegated responsibility to decide whether to progress the project following the formal consultation period.**

**3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Children & Young People
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Children and Families living within the Wards served by the schools
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	Consultation on possible expansion of facilities at TCAT, and altering the age range catered for by The Bridge School with any changes agreed to take effect from September 2015.	

<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	<p>Post 16 high needs students are funded by a combination of Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Local Authority payments. The EFA pays the first £10,000 of funding whilst the Local Authority is responsible for top-up funding in addition to this. Local Authority payments are funded from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). At this stage it is not clear how the required top-up amount at TCAT provision would compare to that at the Bridge, which is currently either £9,000 per student or £15,000 per student. The amount depends upon which band the pupil is assigned to – pupils with higher needs and therefore more support are assigned to the higher band. However, the development of provision at TCAT will release accommodation at the Bridge which will then be available for a likely increase in the number of pre-16 students with high needs. This may help to avoid the placement of such students in more expensive out of area provision.</p> <p>It should be noted that the DfE's provision of funding to Local Authorities for high needs students is subject to continuing changes. The DfE have stated that from 2015/16 the High Needs Block of DSG will be based on actual numbers of pupils in high needs provisions, rather than being based on a combination of historical budgets and number of places as at present. As yet, it is not clear how this will compare to current funding levels.</p> <p>The grant of £1.8m made available via the Demographic Growth Fund was awarded to TCAT who are the accountable body for this funding. TD 27/2/14</p>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>On 28 January 2014 the Government published "School Organisation Maintained Schools: Guidance for proposers and decision-makers" The guidance was issued further to The School Organisation (Prescribed</p>

	<p>Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 28 January 2014 and provides information on the processes involved in making significant changes to maintained schools, establishing new provision and school closure.</p> <p>The guidance is relevant to all categories of maintained schools, unless explicitly stated.</p> <p>There are four stages to the statutory process in respect of significant changes: 1) Publication; 2) Representation (Formal Consultation); 3) Decision; 4) Implementation.</p> <p>The guidance advises that there is a strong expectation on schools and Local Authorities to consult interested parties in developing their proposal prior to Publication as part of their duty under public law to act rationally and take into account all relevant considerations.</p> <p>Departmental advice for local authorities and health partners about implementing the 0 to 25 Special Needs system from September 2014 was published on 9 December 2013.</p> <p>This advice sets out the changes being made to the Special Educational Needs (SEN) system and what organisations need to do to implement the system.</p> <p>Subject to receiving Royal Assent, from September 2014 Part 3 of The Children and Families Bill will place new statutory responsibilities on, and give new powers to, local authorities. Most importantly, local authorities will have to:</p>
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		<p>Work with health and social care colleagues jointly to commission services to deliver integrated support for children and young people with SEN aged 0-25.</p> <p>Consult children, young people and their parents, and cooperate with a range of local providers across education, health, social care and voluntary sector partners to deliver the new system, including post-16 education providers such as further education colleges and training providers.</p> <p>Work with local partners, parents and young people to co-produce and publish a local offer of SEN services and provision to assist young people in finding employment, obtaining accommodation and participating in society.</p> <p>Provide a coordinated education, health and care assessment for children and young people aged 0-25, and new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans that will replace the two existing systems of SEN statements (in schools) and Learning Difficulty Assessments (in further education and training).</p> <p>Offer those with EHC plans the option of a personal budget.</p> <p>Consider the transition from children's to adult services and whether to use a new power to provide children's services to young people over 18 to smooth their transition</p>
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	The curriculum and behaviour management systems at any new provision for children with severe and profound learning difficulties

		would need to be appropriate and modelled on those being successfully used at the present time.
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	Yes	The individual proposals would impact on the individual wards within which schools are located. However there is potentially Borough wide impact as families who have children with special educational needs live throughout the borough.

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **4. INFORMATION**

Currently The Bridge School serves pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties from the ages of 2 to 19 years. There has always been concern that the options available for students once they leave the school are limited and currently a relatively small proportion of this group go on to access further educational opportunities.

Accordingly, the Council's 14 to 19 team put forward a bid to the Demographic Growth Fund to expand the specialist provision available within the Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT) which is situated in Wellington. This bid was successful and has provided a sum of £1.8 million with which to expand provision for learners with complex needs and disabilities.

The proposal is to use the available funding to provide a specialist facility on the TCAT site to cater for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties in the 16 + age group. This will open up opportunities for a broader curriculum offer for this group, combining expertise provided by The Bridge School with specialist accommodation and access to wider facilities within TCAT.

It is hoped that this will also encourage an extension of the opportunities for learners with disabilities at TCAT for the 16 to 25 age group. This would integrate well with national legislation which will replace the current learning difficulty assessments with Education Health and Care plans expected to begin to come in to place from September 2014.

It is also thought that these changes will help to provide an improved transition to adult life for students within this group.

The proposal is to hold a formal consultation between 31<sup>st</sup> March and 12<sup>th</sup> May on these proposals. This allows a period of 6 weeks overall, with 4 weeks falling within school term time. This is compliant with the guidance issued by the Department for Education in January 2104. Parents of children at The Bridge School will all be consulted as will staff and other key partners and stakeholders.

The outcome of the consultation would then, if favourable, be known in time to allow a submission for planning permission and a building schedule that would enable the new facilities to be opened in September 2015.

It is not expected that the number of pupils attending The Bridge School will fall in the long term. The scale of housing development taking place within the borough means that the overall pupil population will increase and if the percentage of pupils needing the specialist educational facilities of The Bridge remains constant the number on roll will remain buoyant.

**5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Discussions are continuing as part of an informal consultation process with TCAT and with parents and staff at The Bridge School. The preferred method of ensuring that the curriculum and behaviour management of any new provision is appropriate is to ensure close links with The Bridge, particularly in the initial set up period of the provision.

**6. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Not applicable.

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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