

**Schools Forum 9 December 2008**

**Report of the Director of Children's Services**

**Consultation Document - Decommissioning of Individual Needs Centres (INCs)**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Schools Forum of the consultation document issued on 17 November relating to the decommissioning of Individual Needs Centres (INCs) located in mainstream schools and re-direction of funding to new specialist provision in mainstream schools.

**Budget Working Group Discussed**

2. Yes -19 November 2008.

**Action for Schools Forum**

3. To note the issue of the consultation document attached, at Appendix A.

**Attachments to Report**

4. Consultation document - Decommissioning of Individual Needs Centres (INCs) Appendix A.

Karen Cocker  
Children's Services Finance Manager  
24 November 2008

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**Background**

2. Individual Needs Centres (INCs) have been in operation in Dudley mainstream schools since 1998. For 2008/09 a budget of £667k is available to fund the mainstream school INCs.
3. INCs were expected to offer provision for statemented pupils with a range of difficulties including language and communication; literacy and skills; learning difficulties; numeracy skills; personal organisation; work skills; and social skills.
4. A recent needs analysis has identified that most INC provision has had a gradual reduction in the number of pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) numbers. Schools across Dudley have developed inclusive practice and more pupils with MLD are attending their local mainstream provision. However the needs analysis identified pupils whose other special educational needs were not being well met within Dudley mainstream schools.
5. The current pupil placements in INCs indicate that the take up is low at 38% with an average per pupil place cost of £13,750. These statistics do not represent effective use of Dedicated Schools Grant resources or offer the best value for money for schools.
6. In order to ensure better use of resources and to take forward key elements of the SEN Strategy, namely developing the range of additional mainstream provision to meet the continuum of need in relation to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD), Speech and Language & Communication Needs and Physical Impairments, it is proposed that the INCs will

be decommissioned from the end of the current financial year 2008/09. The £667,000 budget available will be used to fund the new specialist provisions.

7. The Local Authority will commission services from schools against a pre defined service specification. All mainstream schools will be able to bid for provision of the service.
8. The new provisions will be phased in over two academic years commencing September 2009. Phase 1 will develop the ASD and BESD provision. Phase 2 will develop Speech and Language provision and Physical Impairment provision. There will be interim arrangements put into place for the Phase 2 provision.
9. Full details of the proposals are contained within the consultation document issued on 17 November.
10. Schools Forum has a statutory function and must be consulted by the Council in respect of changes to the Local Management of Schools (LMS) resource allocation formula.
11. The consultation period will be from 17 November 2008 to 31 December 2008, after which date responses to the consultation will be collated and a final report will be presented to the Schools Forum meeting in February 2009 advising members of the outcomes and the resulting recommendations of the Director of Children's Services.

## **Finance**

12. The funding of schools is prescribed by the DCSF through the School Finance (England) Regulations 2008.
13. Schools Forums are regulated by the School Forums Regulations 2002 as already amended by the Schools Forums (Amendment) Regulations 2004 the Schools Forums (Amendment) 2005 Regulations and the Schools Forums (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.
14. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006, the Schools Budget has been funded by a direct DCSF grant: Dedicated School Grant (DSG).

## **Law**

15. Councils' LMS Schemes are made under Section 48 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Acts 1996 and 2002 also have provisions relating to school funding.

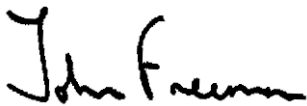
## **Equality Impact**

16. The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy is taken into account when considering the allocation of resources.

## **Recommendation**

17. Schools Forum:

- Note the issue of the consultation document in respect of proposed changes to the resource allocation formula in respect of the decommissioning of Individual Needs Centres (INCs) located in mainstream schools.
- Note that any responses to the consultation document on the decommissioning of Individual Needs Centres (INCs) can be made through the formal consultation process outlined in the attached document.



**John Freeman**

**Director of Children's Services**

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