

Report of the Strategic Director, Children's Services to the meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 22 November 2017

Subject:

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The establishment of a new LA Commissioned Social, Emotional and Mental health (SEMH) Free School in Bradford

Summary statement:

Local authorities play a key role in placing pupils with statements or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, so it is important that they help shape the range of provision in their area. Previously, proposals to establish special free schools have only been taken forward in consultation with local authorities. In October 2016 the Department for Education (DfE) provided an opportunity for local authorities themselves to identify where a new special free school would benefit their area, inform their Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), and seek proposals for the new school they want. This opportunity was intended to identify and meet untapped demand for special free schools as a supplement to LA's existing resources.

Bradford Local Authority was amongst 230 expressions of interest to establish an Local Authority Commissioned SEND Free School. Our bid was successful and Bradford is now one of 19 projects that have been accepted onto the Free School Programme. We are now moving forward to deliver a Joint Services Residential/Day School for children and young people aged 10-19 years of age with complex social emotional and mental health needs. The timeframe for opening of the new school is September 2020.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Children's Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The establishment of a new SEMH Free School in Bradford will create a flexible, centralised facility which acts as an assessment centre with co-located specialised education, health and care services. It will also act as a regional facility offering placements for children and young people from our neighbouring local authorities.
- 1.2 The proposal will create a new, 72 place, co-educational school for 10-19 year old students with SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) needs that will have on site a High Needs SEMH Assessment Centre and Practitioner's Regional Centre of Excellence.
- 1.3 The school will include a residential element and is part of Bradford Council's strategy to deliver care to young people who are looked after or on the edge of care within the District. Small Modular Residential Units for 12 children with a capacity to scale-up to deliver In-Patient Services jointly operated by Bradford Council's Health and Children's and Adults Social Care and Education Services.
- 1.4 The new facility will create provision for children and young people that would likely have been educated and looked after out of the District back to Bradford, so that we can support and meet their complex needs and prepare and support them to achieve meaningful and fulfilled independent adult lives closer to their communities.
- 1.5 The school will use high needs block funding to join services together for the benefit of children and Young People and their families on one site by creating a regional facility which will become a centre of excellence specialising in children and young adult mental health.
- 1.6 By creating a caring, secure, stimulating and flexible learning environment tailored to the needs of every child we will promote success and achievement, health and well-being, safety and engagement.
- 1.7 Providing personalised therapeutic support will enable children and young people to build the confidence and emotional resilience they need to manage their everyday lives and develop the language, literacy and communication skills necessary to realise their potential in all areas.
- 1.8 The school will prepare young people for adulthood through the teaching of skills and attitudes, enabling them to participate fully and have a meaningful role in society with the foundations to become independent and lifelong learners.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under Part 1 of Bradford' Council's SEND Review that commenced in July 2016: 'Ensuring the sufficiency of specialist places in the Bradford District for children and young people with SEND – current and future need', schools, in partnership with the Local Authority, mapped current provision for SEMH across the District and identified that a gap exists at the far end of the continuum for complex and challenging SEMH children and young people.
- 2.2 The review and data associated with it has highlighted a real need for the expansion of existing provision in the District. Our current level of need and demand for places both within the District and our number of young people in out of authority placement projected into the future show us that at least 75% of the places within the school would be filled by Bradford young people.
- 2.3 There is a growing need in Bradford for provision to meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of children and young people. In May 2016 of the 2,424 statements/EHC plans issued, 409 (17%) of these were for SEMH. The number of statements/EHC plans for SEMH has risen by 21% from May 2015 to May 2016, 338 to 409. The highest increase across all our SEND types and this has continued to grow in 2017. The percentage of children and young people with statements/EHC plans for SEMH in Bradford District is 1.1% higher than the national average and 2.1% higher than our regional neighbours in Yorkshire and Humberside. The percentage of children and young people identified as requiring SEN Support for SEMH in Bradford is 19.6% of our school population and equates to 2,784 children and young people. This is 2.3% above the national average.
- 2.4 Currently 44 young people with SEMH receive education outside of the Bradford area. The new school will bring children and young people back to Bradford closer to families and communities and reduce the expensive cost of out of District placements.
- 2.5 It is anticipated that around 50 places at the school would be filled by Bradford children and young people. A number of our regional local authorities have expressed an interest in commissioning places; amongst them are Kirklees and Calderdale.
- 2.4 Bradford Council have a track record of establishing high quality provision; 80% of specialist behaviour in Bradford is judged by Ofsted to be good with one of our provision being outstanding. We are confident that we have the capacity and expertise to offer support to this exciting venture. We also have the capacity and expertise to self-deliver the build and are working closely with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) and the DfE to realise this.
- 2.5 In November 2016 partners in Bradford Council expressed an interest in commissioning a Free School for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. In June 2017, the DfE announced that out of the 230 bids submitted that Bradford was one of 20 through to the final stages. This has now reduced to one of nineteen.
- 2.6 The competition to secure a sponsor for the new Free School commenced on 27 July 2017 and will run for 4 months, closing at mid-day on 24 November 2017.

From 24 November 2017 – 22 December 2017 applications will be assessed by an Local Authority (LA) panel and independently by the DfE and the RSC. Commencing at the start of January 2018 until 16 February 2018 sponsor interviews and assessments will take place. The DfE are anticipating that the chosen sponsor for the 19 national new Free Schools will be announced before Easter 2018.

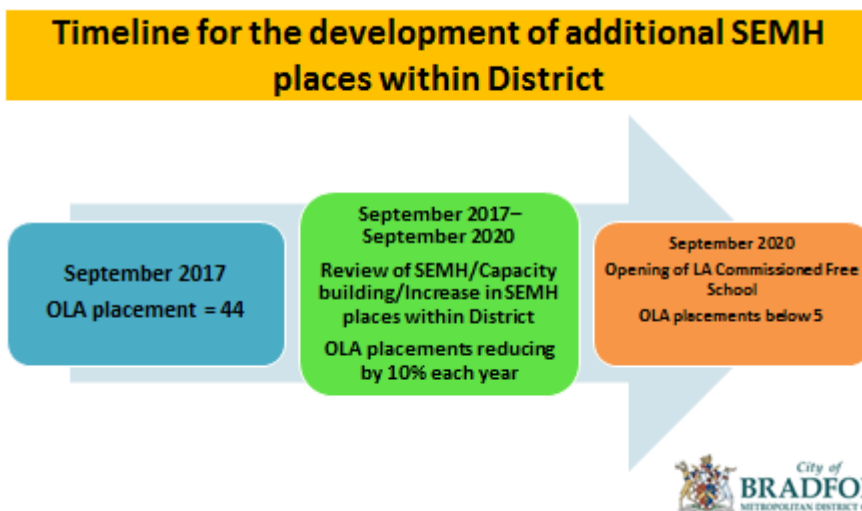
- 2.7 The Council has requested to the Department for Education that it is able to self-deliver the scheme and design and build the School itself using the funding allocated by the DfE. If this approach is approved the Council intends during 2018 to work with the appointed sponsors to design the School before tendering the scheme with a view to the new school being constructed and open by September 2020.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The establishment of the Free School will need to go to the Executive and will also need to be part of a formal consultation with stakeholders. Discussions with commissioners and providers in public health and CAMHS will need to take place to commission the necessary health and therapeutic interventions on-site at the new school.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.1 Currently the Local Authority has 44 children and young people placed out of the Local Authority for education and education/care. The financial cost of this is significant, around £4.5m. The new Free School will provide facilities within the District for our most vulnerable and complex pupils at a significantly lower cost. It will also enable us to keep young children within the District closer to their families and communities.



- 4.2 The capital and buildings work will be funded by the ESFA. Bradford Council has indicated to the DfE that they have the necessary expertise and capacity to self-deliver the school build which will include educational, residential and therapeutic facilities.

- 4.3 A site for the school has been identified and this will be leased to the sponsor for 125 years under a peppercorn rent agreement.
- 4.4 Education funding will be made up from the pupil place element (£10,000) plus top up at Range 6-7 (£14,122 - £23,205). The total cost of day places, including the cost of Education and CAHMS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), is £32,430 which is significantly cheaper than the independent sector and would offer quality and value for money which supports the needs of the young people and families.
- 4.5 Bradford Council has received commissioning letters from Kirklees Council for up to 20 places and Calderdale Council for around 5 places.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 5.1 Bradford Council will work closely with a link adviser from the DfE to appoint a sponsor to run the school. Following this a project board will be set up to oversee the assessment of the sponsor and delivery of the build and will regularly report to the SEND Strategic Partnership on the progress of the school.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 6.1 Bradford Council will work closely with the DfE and will fully comply with the legal guidance around the procurement of a sponsor.
- 6.2 Appropriate planning permission and further advice around the establishment of the new school will be sought from Legal Services on the formal establishment of the new school.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

An equality impact assessment has been completed for the establishment of the new school and is attached to this report.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The school has a planned growth model for the gradual admission of new pupils. Funding will be allocated to match this to ensure that over the first two years the school is financially viable. Pupil numbers will be monitored and commissioning arrangements with neighbouring Local Authorities adjusted to ensure sustainability of the Free School.

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Any development or changes to buildings undertaken as a result of these proposals will be undertaken in a sustainable way which minimises the future impact of the Local Authority's carbon footprint.

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Formal consultation will take place with the community and all stakeholders on the establishment of the school will take place following the appropriate statutory processes.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no direct Human Rights implications arising from this report.

7.6 TRADE UNION

None arising from this report.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Ward Councillors will be formally consulted upon about the proposals affecting their wards.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

Formal consultation and establishment of the new school will be shared at Area Committee for Bradford West.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

8.1 None

9. OPTIONS

9.1 The report is presented for information and update at this stage.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 The Equality Impact Assessment

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

12.1 Bradford Council Commissioned Free School Specification

12.2 Continuum of SEMH Provision across the Primary and Secondary Sectors in Bradford