



EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26.09.17

SUBJECT: DELEGATION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FUNDING

REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the work that has been undertaken to date with regard to proposals to delegate additional support funding to schools.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report describes the work undertaken to date on the proposal to delegate additional support funding to schools and reasons for wanting to go out to formal consultation with all headteachers and other relevant stakeholders.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 SEN and Inclusion Strategy

- 3.2 SEN Code of Practice for Wales (2002)

- 3.3 The report contributes towards the Well-being Goals within the Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, specifically:

- A prosperous Wales as this is about developing a skilled and well educated population;
- a healthier Wales as this is about maximising peoples physical and well-being;
- a more equal Wales, as this is about enabling people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances are.

4.0 THE REPORT

- 4.1 Caerphilly County Borough Council has a range of policies for special educational needs and inclusion, consistent with the Welsh Government's agenda for children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN).

- 4.2 The majority of local authorities across Wales and all of the neighbouring Gwent local authorities, have already delegated additional support funding to schools. In Caerphilly Local Authority (LA) funding for additional support for schools has historically been retained centrally. The budget for additional support is £3.6m; this includes the employment of 104 centrally employed teaching assistants and the administration to support this finding. The major share of SEN expenditure is retained centrally but schools utilise the majority of SEN funding to undertake their responsibility for SEN provision.

- 4.3 Delegation of ALN funding to schools in Caerphilly has been discussed with Headteachers over a number of years. As part of the ALN Review an Additional Support Task and Finish group was established in 2015 to consider options for delegation. Every school cluster has a Headteacher representative on the task and finish group to ensure that all headteachers are kept up to date with discussions around delegation and have opportunities to respond to developments through their cluster representative.
- 4.4 Initial recommendations from the task and finish group were approved by headteachers in July 2016 and implemented from 1st April 2017. These were,
- From 1st April 2017 all primary schools with Nursery settings received a lump sum (£1,950) to cover support for toileting.
 - From 1st April 2017 there will only be first day absence cover for pupils receiving 15 hours and above additional support. Cover for pupils receiving 1-14 hours will be considered after the third day of absence, day one cover will be provided for pupils receiving 12.5 hours support in a nursery setting. This will not apply where funding for additional support has been devolved to the school.
- 4.5 The principle upon which the task and finish group has based the need to change is that the current system is no longer fit for purpose and unsustainable. Feedback from the Additional Support Task and Finish Group to Headteachers in July 2016 identified that the current additional support allocation system was inflexible, bureaucratic and restrictive. It was recognised that the Local Authority and schools needed to work together to find a solution to what was described as a 'shared challenge'. Miss R Collins (Headteacher St Cenydd Community Comprehensive School) and Mr D Witchell (Headteacher, Cwmfelinfach and Ynysddu Primary Schools) informed the Headteacher meeting that, the following principles were identified as being key to any proposed delegation system :
- the system is creative and flexible and allows schools to effectively plan and manage additional support for pupils with ALN;
 - the impact of additional support on pupil outcomes and value for money can be measured and evaluated.
- 4.6 The Additional Support Task and Finish group consider that earlier intervention enabled by greater delegation of funding would support the needs of many pupils in a more timely fashion and would more effectively support schools to meet their responsibilities as outlined in the draft ALN Reform Bill. Confidence of parents /carers and the understanding of health professionals are seen as key to the success of such an approach to funding ALN.
- 4.7 Headteacher representatives on the Task and Finish group were tasked with developing delegation models in consultation with their clusters. Following a meeting on 18th May 2017 delegation models were identified as having the potential for further consultation with all schools and relevant stakeholders.
- 4.8 The Task and Finish group unanimously agreed that any delegated funding should be to individual schools which could either manage this funding independently or alternatively choose to pool delegated funds and work collaboratively in partnership with other schools.
- 4.9 There is no pre-conceived idea on what would constitute a partnership arrangement. It is envisaged that these could be flexible and diverse and reflect the individual and collective needs of schools in Caerphilly. For example, partnership arrangements could be based on
- secondary schools and their primary feeder schools;
 - geographical location;
 - existing joint working arrangements;
 - 'family of school' groups.

- 4.10 The task and finish group also agreed that whatever factors are included in a funding formula methodology that these should be based on a rolling three year average.
- 4.11 At the task and finish meeting 18th May 2017 it was agreed to seek the views of headteachers in a pre-consultation exercise in order to inform a fully costed consultation exercise in the autumn term 2017. The pre-consultation survey took place between 13th -30th June and the outcomes from this were presented to the task and finish group on 11th July 2017 (**Appendix 1**)
- 4.12 The Local Authority's Inclusion and Additional Learning Needs Service has responsibility for managing the current process for allocating additional support. There are established protocols and an administrative infrastructure, which underpin this process. The views of headteachers regarding the current system (see point 4.5) and the impending Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill, provides an ideal opportunity for the additional support allocation process to be refreshed.
- 4.13 Agreement will be sought from CMT to proceed with a formal consultation with headteachers and relevant stakeholders on the proposal to delegate the additional support budget to schools.

5.0 WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Well-being Goals as set out in Links to Strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in the Act and more specifically for the principles noted below.
- **Integration** – the delegation of the additional support budget will provide schools with the opportunity to work together either in cluster or family of school groups to provide targeted support to vulnerable learners. The skills and knowledge of practitioners will be enhanced and this arrangement will ensure that the educational and social skills of learners with additional needs will be more effectively met.
 - **Long-term** - The proposal recognises the importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard meeting long-term needs. The delegation of the additional support budget will provide a more sustainable funding model and develop capacity and expertise in mainstream school settings.
 - **Prevention** – Access to additional support provides helps vulnerable learners access the curriculum and for children/young people with physical / medical needs the school environment. Targeted, time limited and effective additional support can be highly effective in addressing a range of difficulties experienced by children/young people, which has a positive impact on their well-being and attainments.
 - **Involvement** – The proposal to consult on additional support delegation recognises the importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the outcome and those people reflect the diversity of the area which the report addresses. All relevant stakeholders will be involved in the consultation process including third sector organisations. We are collaborating with headteachers as part of the Task and Finish Group and they, in turn, will be working with their partners.

6.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Council's full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) process will be applied to the formal Consultation Document and subsequent report to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial consequences from this report. However, fully costed delegated funding options will follow a formal consultation process.

8.0 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Currently there are 104 centrally employed teaching assistants. Delegation of additional support could impact on personnel currently employed in central team. Following the consultation process, we will be able to be more specific about the potential impact to personnel. Any staff affected will be fully consulted along with trade union representatives and supported through HR processes.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Views on the proposal have been sought from Education SMT and the Headteacher stakeholder group. The report reflects the views of the consultees from that group.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That a formal consultation on additional support delegation take place in the autumn term 2017.

11.0 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 Delegation of this budget to schools would support the needs of many pupils in a more timely fashion and would more effectively support schools to meet their responsibilities as outlined in the draft ALN Reform Bill

12.0 STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Education (Wales) Act 2014
Education Act 1996 - Equality Act 2010

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Cllr Wynne David, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Gaynor Oliver, Vice Chair, Education Scrutiny Committee
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Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities and Welsh Language

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Pre consultation survey outcomes
Appendix 2 Delegation Options