

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	1 June 2017
REPORT TITLE	Future plans for Pupil Support Services and Cordyce School
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/17/030
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
REPORT AUTHOR	Lesley Stopani

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

This report is to advise committee of the development of Hub provision and to request approval to undertake a statutory consultation exercise on a proposal to close Cordyce School.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the content of this report, which outlines the further transformation of our service to ensure the needs of all Aberdeen city's Children are being met;
- (ii) Instruct the Head of Inclusion to continue to work with partners to develop the city's continuum of provision, thereby improving the likelihood of children and young people maintaining their mainstream place and securing a positive destination beyond school. (Appendix 1).
- (iii) Instruct the Head of Inclusion to oversee the preparation of a proposal document for public consultation on the proposal to close Cordyce School in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended.
- (iv) Report to Committee on the outcome of the statutory consultation at the November Committee to enable a decision on the future of Cordyce School to be made.

3. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 This report reflects the progress made following the “Transformation of Pupil Support Services and impact on Cordyce School” presented to Council in July 2016 when approval was given to continue to take forward the recommendations of the Inclusion Review (2014) and it was noted that a future report regarding the future of Cordyce School would follow.

During session 2016/17 the young people who previously attended Cordyce School have followed bespoke Learning Pathways, which were established to better meet their individual needs. These pathways have included study towards qualifications; opportunities for individual achievements and personal challenges to develop their social skills, self-confidence and resilience. The majority of young people responded positively to this approach and there was an improvement in their engagement in learning and attendance levels. Feedback from the young people has been generally positive and those in S4 and S5 are proud of their successes and feel better prepared for their next steps.

No additional young people were placed on the roll at Cordyce School, instead officers worked with schools to develop bespoke pathways for those children and young people who find the school experience stressful and whose distress manifests itself in distressing behaviour. A wide range of interventions have been deployed, including those of a therapeutic nature, which have promoted emotional wellbeing. There is now an evidence base of effective interventions, which can be rolled-out across the city to any of our learners. There will be no children on the roll of Cordyce In August 2017.

Following previous consultation a small group representing all sectors in Education, NHS Grampian and our Third Sector Partners has developed the model for the Hub and Outreach provision, which will replace the provision at Cordyce. This development is in line with the recommendations of the Inclusion Review and takes account of the Mental Health Strategy (2017).

The Hub and Outreach provision will enable children and young people to stay on the roll of their local school, enabling them to remain within their community. The flexibility of this provision will ensure that we are better able to meet the needs of more of our vulnerable learners, leading to improved outcomes which will enable them to move on to positive destinations. In light of this the Cordyce building is no longer suited to the approaches which will be taken to support this group of children and young people.

- 3.2 Since August 2016 the St Nicholas Centre, Bridge of Don, has operated as a pilot Hub provision by supporting some of Aberdeen City’s most vulnerable learners.

Consultation and discussion with Head Teachers, council partners, NHS Grampian and third sector organisations has been ongoing and there is a demonstrable commitment to the further development of such Hubs, which it is believed will deliver sector leading provision for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs within Aberdeen City.

Feedback from the young people who are currently accessing some of the activities which will be key to the Hub provisions has been positive. There is evidence of improved attendance and engagement in learning amongst the cohort of young people who were on the roll of Cordyce but over the past year have followed bespoke pathways.

These provisions will also provide an Outreach Service leading to more timeous and appropriate interventions for children and young people while still in their mainstream school. Key to this provision will be the offer of a shared placement with mainstream schools, underlining the importance of maintaining community links for these children and young people.

- 3.3 There is significant commitment to this development from NHS Grampian's CAMHs and School Nurse Services and The Foyer. By working together we have the opportunity to support each other to ensure that collectively we can secure the best education and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people so that they can enter positive destinations beyond school.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are financial implications in relation to Cordyce School as this property will no longer be required as a location for a Specialist Provision. The current average annual running costs for the property are:

- Oil & Electricity - £48,800
- Carbon Charges - £5,400
- Water - £5,400
- Cleaning - £26,660
- Repairs/Maintenance - £32,400
- Grounds Maintenance - £4,700
- Waste Collection - £5,900
- Rates - £0. Expected to be £80k once vacated (after initial rates relief period).

- 4.2 The property running costs are the highest per pupil of all Aberdeen City's schools. In addition, the building is not fully utilised as the accommodation blocks are not required. Given the property's ratings a significant amount of money would be required to bring it to a state where it was fit for purpose:

- Suitability – C (Poor)
- Condition – C (Poor)
- Energy Performance Certificate – G (Very poor)
- Heating – Oil. High carbon emission fuel

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As an authority we have a duty to fully implement:

- The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, which outlines the presumption of mainstreaming;
- The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, which advises of the need to acknowledge social, emotional and behavioural needs as an additional support need;
- The Children and Young People Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- UNCRC

With reference to a proposal to close Cordyce School we are required to follow the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. Refer to Appendix 2 for summary timeline.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- Financial: no risk, costs to be met from existing budgets
- Employee: no risk, all current staff to be retained within the service
- Customer / citizen: no risk, bespoke Pathway to be in place for student
- Environmental: at this point officers are engaged in identifying suitable properties which can be adapted as Hubs. There is also work being done to develop an agreement with a Third Sector partner to share premises to improve the quality of our joint delivery of provision for this vulnerable group of children and young people.
- Legal: The Scottish Government may not support the request to close Cordyce. To address this possibility a robust proposal containing the educational benefits will be compiled. This will include all relevant city data and plans for the alternative provision, which will be in line with the Government's Mental Health Strategy (March 2017). This will not prevent the development of the Hub provisions as they are designed to better meet the needs of individual children and young people. The Hub provisions will provide individuals with carefully planned interventions to address their unmet needs. This will support the council's purpose to ensure the People and Place prosper and are protected from harm.
- Reputational: no risk, improved provisions for children and young people will result.

7. IMPACT SECTION

Economy

The developments outlined in this report relate to the continued transformation of the Pupil Support Service and replacement for Cordyce School. This provision will allow us to develop a more effective service for children, young people and their families. The significant resource available can be more efficiently deployed leading to improved outcomes for children, young people, their families and communities. The cohort of highly skilled staff who will provide the specialist provision will through their outreach roles support the upskilling of our mainstream staff through delivery of CPD and the modelling of good practice which will be evident in the outreach service.

International evidence suggests that the provision of appropriate and timely interventions have a significant impact on the capacity of children and young people to overcome their barriers to learning and to fulfil their potential, thus enabling them to move on to positive destinations, which benefit not only them as individuals but their families, communities and the City.

Through the continuum of provision we aim to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to develop the 4 capacities outlined in Curriculum for Excellence: Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens, Effective Contributors and Successful Learners. This will contribute to the development of resilient communities where there is a reduced dependency on services provided by Aberdeen City Council.

People

The recently published Mental Health Strategy states:

“Inequality related to disabilities, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and background can all affect mental wellbeing and incidence of mental illness. Some groups are more likely than others in our society to experience mental ill-health and poorer mental wellbeing – for example, people who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood events, people who have substance use problems, people who are experiencing homelessness, people who are experiencing loneliness or social isolation, veterans, refugees and asylum seekers.”

“Current legislation in Scotland places a duty on Local Authorities to provide services for those who have or have had a mental health problem, to promote their well-being and social development, and a duty to minimise the effect of mental disorder and give people the opportunity to lead lives which are as normal as possible.”

We are confident that our continuum of provision, with the development of Hub provision, designed specifically to meet the educational and wellbeing needs of children and young people, will lead to positive outcomes for people with protected characteristics.

Account has been taken of feedback from colleagues within Education, in particular the views of Head Teachers engaged in a co-design event; partners from NHS Grampian and the Third Sector via a short-life review group. We will continue to work in partnership as the Hub Provisions are developed to review their impact.

Staff in schools will benefit from the support which will be provided to enable children and young people to experience lower levels of distress within mainstream settings.

The development of Hub provision will lead to an equality of provision across the city for children in need of additional supports to meet their social, emotional and mental health needs. This will improve the life chances of vulnerable learners.

Place

This provision is being developed in response to the levels of social, emotional and mental wellbeing issues prevalent within the city. The aim is to ensure equity of service for these children, young people and their families. By working in partnership with others to provide therapeutic approaches to meet the needs of this vulnerable group we will help them to develop their resilience, which will impact positively on them as individuals and the communities in which they live.

Technology

The TASSCC service, which provides technological assistance for children and young people whose ability to access the curriculum is impeded, will continue to recommend appropriate hardware and software solutions for children and young people in need of support at Targeted / Specialist Level.

Shared Placements will require increased access to Google Classroom to ensure children and young people have access to the same curriculum as peers.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Transformation of Pupil Support Services and Impact on Cordyce School
report to E&CS committee 8 September 2016.

Inclusion Review (2014)

Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 (Revised May 2015)

The Scottish Government Mental Health Strategy: 2017 – 2027 (March 2017)

The Children & Young People's Act (2015)

Scottish Government Guidance - With Inclusion in Mind: the local authority's role in promoting well-being and social development (2007)

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

Appendix 1: Continuum of Provision

Appendix 2: Summary Timeline for Statutory Consultation process

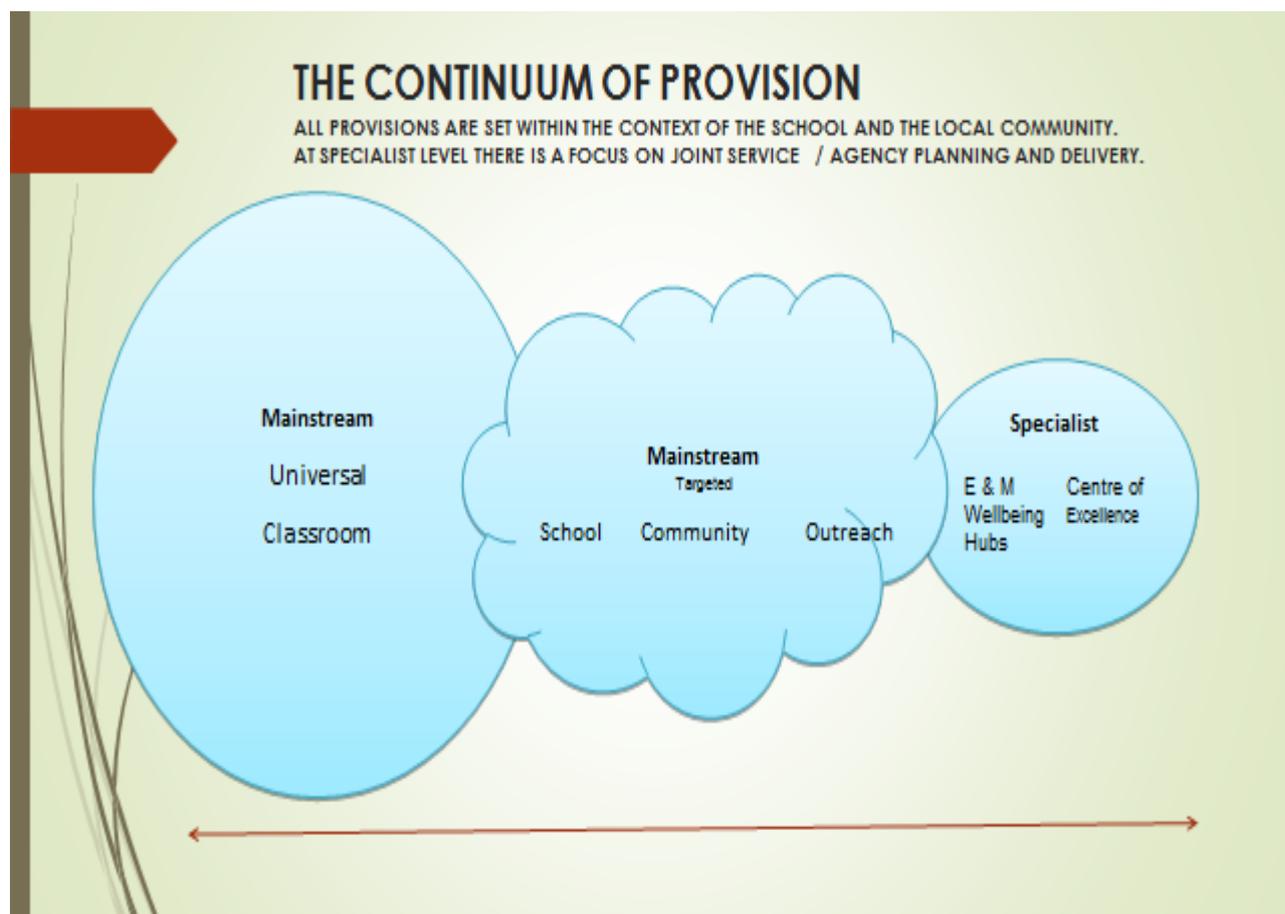
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ABERDEEN CITY CONTINUUM OF PROVISION		
Universal	Mainstream School	By the classroom teacher, supported by school colleagues, as appropriate.
Targeted	Mainstream School in conjunction with Outreach Services and local partners	By the school, supported by local community partners accessed via Partnership Forums, as appropriate
Specialist	Mainstream School in conjunction with Specialist Outreach Provisions; Orchard Brae, Centre of Excellence and Specialist Hubs.	Monitored by the school, supported by specialist partners and accessed via Hub Provision.



DATE	SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 TIMELINE
March 2017	Prepare report for June E&CS committee
FROM APRIL 2017	Gather data for statutory Proposal Paper. Create the Proposal Paper and share with Directorate Leadership Team. Advise Education Scotland of intention.
AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2017	Publish the Proposal Paper <i>Advertise and notify Education Scotland and relevant consultees</i> Give notice of the Public Meeting Hold Public Meeting Consultation process (<i>minimum of 6 weeks to include 30 days of term time</i>)
OCTOBER 2017	Provide Education Scotland with copies of the written representations, summary of oral representations and other relevant documentation in order that they can produce their Report on the proposal (generally takes 3 weeks). Prepare Consultation Report.
NOVEMBER 2017	Inform E & CS Committee of Consultation outcomes. Publication of Consultation Report. 3 weeks form the publication of the Consultation Report ACC makes decision. Notify Scottish Ministers within 6 working days of decision to implement closure proposal.