

Subject:	Proposed New Development of Cullum Centres for Children with Autism in Partnership with the National Autistic Society and Cullum Family Trust		
Date of Meeting:	12 July 2018		
Report of:	Executive Director Families Children & Learning		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Regan Delf	Tel: 293504
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Wards affected:	All		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the potential partnership with the National Autistic Society (NAS) and the Cullum Family Trust to create a new Special Facility for children with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) at Dorothy Stringer School and to re-develop and enhance the existing Special Facility, known as The Phoenix Centre, at Hove Park School. These Special Facilities would receive considerable capital funding from the Cullum Family Trust and would be known as Cullum Centres.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the further exploration of the partnership with the National Autistic Society and Cullum Family Trust to create two Cullum Centres at Dorothy Stringer School and Hove Park School respectively, with more detailed recommendations to be taken to the Children, Young People and Skills Committee in the autumn 2018.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A review of all specialist provision in the City for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was carried out in 2014 and recommended a wide ranging re-organisation, which was then subject to an extensive period of consultation with all stakeholders.
- 3.2 At the Children, Young People and Skills Committee on 18 September 2017, final decisions were taken regarding the re-organisation proposals, this included a commitment to open a new Special Facility for children with autism in a secondary school in the City.
- 3.3 Secondary schools were asked to express an interest in hosting a new Special Facility. Originally three schools expressed an interest but for different reasons, two schools did not wish to proceed. The third school, Dorothy Stringer, has continued to explore with us the potential of developing the provision on their site.

- 3.4 Dorothy Stringer School has a strong reputation for SEND support and is committed to the project. However the school is part of the councils grouped schools PFI contract and this presents a challenge as any development will need to be agreed with the PFI provider.
- 3.5 In addition to this, legislation requires that the Secretary of State for Education (SoS) is asked for consent when any building is undertaken on school land. The guidance indicates that there is a presumption against change. There is however a general consent available if the new building is built on land that was previously a car park or roadway.
- 3.6 The final challenge is achieving the necessary planning consent for any development. The school is part of a large education campus which brings thousands of pupils/students to the area each day. Any application which increases the number of pupils/students and traffic movements will be carefully scrutinised.
- 3.7 However the vision for the new Facility is that it will be a central part of a high performing school that is also inclusive in ethos for children with SEND. We believe Dorothy Stringer is an excellent choice in both respects. The school is already a popular choice for parents of children with SEND and a rising number of children with Education, Health and Care plans are very well placed there.
- 3.8 The Special Facility would take 20 children with autism in total admitting 4 children per annum into Year 7 over five years. These children would be admitted over and above the existing PAN for the school and would therefore not affect established admission numbers.
- 3.9 The LA would be the Admissions Authority and all children would have Education, Health and Care plans administered by the Local Authority.
- 3.10 Our agreed view with Dorothy Stringer is that if we were able to proceed with the project there, space restrictions would necessitate a new build on the site for the Special Facility, with the capital expense rising as a consequence. Although a sum of £7.5M has been set aside for the capital requirements of the wider re-organisation of special provision, this is already committed to special school development and further funding is therefore required for this project.
- 3.11 However at the end of 2017, the DfE invited us to bid for a capital sum to develop SEN provision totalling nearly £500K over 3 years. Our proposal to use this sum to develop our new Special Facility is published on our [Local Offer](#) and has been accepted by the DfE. We will receive the first instalment of £167k this year.
- 3.12 In a parallel development, through our links with the National Autistic Society (NAS), the society offered to explore with us whether they might support the development of the new Special Facility with a potential large donation in the region of £1million for capital costs. The donation would be from the Cullum Family Trust. The Trust works with the National Autistic Society to create new Special Facilities in mainstream schools, which are then called 'Cullum Centres'.

- 3.13 The financial commitment sought from the authority from the National Autistic Society would be a one-off project initiation fee (£50K per build but with room for negotiation possible if both projects go forward) and then an annual commitment in the region of £7-14K for training of staff and continued accreditation of the Facilities.
- 3.14 Revenue costs would need to be recouped from savings made in other areas. Place costs in our Special Facilities are in the region of £17K per annum whereas the average cost of an independent 'agency' placement is £39K per annum and in the area of autism, often considerably higher than the average, so there is a potential significant saving in the High Needs Block.
- 3.15 The need for SoS consent for any resultant building (as raised in paragraph 8 above) also applies to the Hove Park School sites. The need for planning consent is also likely to present a challenge.
- 3.16 The Cullum Family Trust was founded by Peter Cullum CBE and is run by him and his family. Peter Cullum is a businessman and philanthropist. His interest in establishing centres within mainstream schools for children with autism arises from a family connection with the condition. The family trust also has a longstanding connection to Sussex, and manages some of its giving via the Sussex Community Foundation.

So far, three Cullum Centres have opened, all in Surrey, and a fourth is in planning. They are in:

- Salesian School, Chertsey
 - Rodborough School, Godalming
 - Hinchley Wood School, Esther
- 3.17 We have explored this offer with the NAS over the past several months, including visiting two Cullum Centres and discussions with Surrey LA. We have also been given copies of existing service level agreements governing the partnership.
- 3.18 With the potential offer in the region of £1M from the Cullum Family Trust and the £500K funding from the DfE, our view was that more could be done over and above the creation of just one new Facility. We therefore proposed to the National Autistic Society that we might also develop the existing Special Facility at Hove Park School, the Phoenix Centre. This successful and valued provision has rather inadequate premises and is restricted in the number of children it can admit as a consequence. We therefore proposed to the NAS that we include Hove Park as a second school. This would mean a re-development of the sites of The Phoenix Centre (lower and upper school) into a Cullum Centre alongside the creation of a new Facility at Dorothy Stringer School.

- 3.19 The Chief Executive of the National Autistic Society, the Director of Commercial Development NAS, the private donor, Peter Cullum and his son visited both Dorothy Stringer and Hove Park Schools on Wednesday 13 June with officers and parent representatives. They were impressed with both schools and have indicated a willingness potentially to invest in both. The proviso is that we also commit the £500K capital funding we have from the DfE to the combined projects.
- 3.20 Their proposal is that in partnership with ourselves, the Cullum Family Trust provide the capital funding in its entirety to build the Special Facility at Dorothy Stringer and that in addition they build new premises for the existing Phoenix Centre on Hove Park Lower School in Hangleton Way. They then suggest we use the £500K capital funding we have to create a parallel provision on the upper school site in Nevill Road. This would be subject to further exploration but in principle seems to offer good value subject to the necessary consultation and consents.

4 Community engagement and participation

- 4.1 Substantial engagement and participation has taken place throughout the development of SEND proposals. The wider review of SEND in the City was co-produced with all stakeholders, including children and families, schools, health colleagues and the community and voluntary sector. Parents and Carers have also been involved in the development of the proposals around the new Facility and there was good attendance from the Parent and Carers Council and from mASCot, a local group representing parents of children with autism, at the meetings with the NAS and schools on 13 June 2018.
- 4.2 Families fully support the development of further specialist provision within our mainstream schools as part of a matrix of provision for this complex condition.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The purpose of proposals to create a new secondary special facility for children and young people with autism and to substantially upgrade and improve the site of an existing Facility at Hove Park School in partnership with the National Autistic Society and the Cullum Foundation.
- 5.2 The advantages of working in partnership with the National Autistic Society and Cullum Trust are as follows:
- 5.2.1 Partnership with a high profile national charity in an area of high demand in the City
 - 5.2.2 The opportunity to extend and enhance our offer of specialist educational provision to children and families affected by this often complex and challenging developmental disorder
 - 5.2.3 Substantial additional capital funding
 - 5.2.4 The opportunity to create excellent premises and facilities within an inclusive setting, where children with autism can benefit from both

specialist support and all the opportunities available in a mainstream environment

5.2.5 Enhanced credibility for our provision with families through the training and accreditation provided by the NAS, which should reduce the demand for expensive out of City independent special school places. This should lead to a saving in the High Needs Block which is under substantial pressure

5.2.6 A positive 'good news' story for the City and its young people with autism.

5.3 While there are challenges in relation to development on the Dorothy Stringer site, there are very many substantial advantages also for our children and families in siting a specialist unit within a high performing inclusive school and we would like to explore the potential for this as a host school further.

5.4 With high level approval from Policy, Resources and Growth Committee, a more detailed report with recommendations will be presented to Children, Young People and Skills Committee in the autumn.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Work is being undertaken to identify the financial implications of the proposed partnership with the National Autistic Society and the associated Cullum Trust to create two Cullum Centres. The areas being considered include:

- whether the build costs for the two Cullum Centres will be within the total capital budget of £1.5m (this is comprised of £1m from the Cullum Trust and £0.5m already secured from SEND Capital grant);
- whether it is permissible to use the SEND capital grant to fund the initial one-off £0.050m (or 2 x £0.050ms for the two Centres) for the planning and site development process which the Cullum Trust require as the LA contribution. If this is not allowable this may have to be found from a revenue budget;
- the annual costs for training and accreditation would have to be funded from revenue-the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG);
- the implications of Dorothy Stringer being a PFI school;
- the ongoing funding of 'additional' places – there would be new specialist provision within the city and revenue funding (place plus top-up) would need to be identified to resource these places. This could be through places released from our maintained special schools or perhaps a reallocation of places from other Special Facilities. Alternatively if more specialist provision is available in the city it might enable us to reduce agency placements (average cost of an Agency Placement is £0.039m). The initial impact would be quite low but as the units incrementally build up the costs will increase.

The HNB is under pressure and overspent by 0.291m in 2017/18. The main areas of overspend were the Brighton and Hove Inclusion Support Service (BHISS) and High Needs top up funding in mainstream and special schools.

The HNB budget of £24.355m is projected to overspend by £0.276m in 2018/19.

In 2018/19 the DfE has also announced an additional national grant for Special Provision for SEND of £50m. The BHCC share of this would equate to £0.116m. This

could be utilised to fund some of the costs above dependent upon the conditions of the grant.

Finance Officer Consulted: Louise Hoten

Date: 22 June 2018

Legal Implications:

The legal implications will be explored in the report which is brought to Children, Young People and Skills Committee in the autumn. . They will cover whether there are any procurement issues, who will engage the building contractor, the contractual framework needed to bring this project forward and any other implications which are relevant.

Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland

Date: 29 June 2018

Equalities Implications:

The new provision would substantially increase capacity for a vulnerable group of children with SEND in the City.