

# LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

## PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SELECT COMMITTEE

### REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS & LIBRARIES

NAME OF WARD(S)  
ALL

**REPORT TITLE: SEN Best Value Review**

FP Ref: EAL-03/04-0039

#### **1.0 SUMMARY**

1.1 This report summarises the findings and recommendations of the recent SEN Best Value Review; and sets out an action plan for their implementation.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That members note the findings of Best Value Review Panel.

2.2 That members approve the Action Plan set out in pages 41 to 51 of the attached report.

#### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The recommendations within the report will be met within the Core SEN budget for 2004/5. This includes successful growth bids of i) £14,000 to improve monitoring arrangements through follow up to annual review of statements and ii) £40,000 to enable the appointment of a School Improvement Adviser for the early years with effect from September 2004.

3.2 In view of the overspend on the SEN out-Borough budget in 2003/4 the following actions have been prioritised for immediate action

- i) completion of the special school review.
- ii) strengthening placement decision making procedures.
- iii) review of current out-Borough cases to identify, where appropriate, alternative local placements.

It is envisaged that further investment in local SEN provision in the short term will lead to longer term savings. Given the additional revenue growth of 1.7 million in 2004/5 and flexibility in the 2004/5 capital programme, action will be taken in 2004/5 to improve local provision.

3.3 If funding is not available in 2004/5, consideration will be given to submitting a growth bid for 2005/6 in respect of

- i) developments in local SEN provision arising from the review of special school provision which is being undertaken recommendations 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.5 and 3.6).
- ii) increasing LEA capacity to monitor use of schools' delegated funding (recommendation 1.7) and to amend statements (recommendation 3.0)
- iii) extending parent partnership service in response to increasing demand (recommendation 4.0)

#### **4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. However, staffing structures in the LEA will be reviewed in light of this report, the early years Best Value review which is currently underway and the Council's response to the proposals in the Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters'.

#### **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Under the 1996 Education Act, local authorities are responsible for ensuring that appropriate provision is put into place to meet the needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The local authority is responsible for

- managing the process of statutory assessment, issuing and monitoring of statements
- planning provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools where possible, taking account of parental preference
- distributing resources to schools to help them and children's special educational needs
- providing specialist advice and support to schools to assist schools in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN
- providing advice and support to parents

#### **6.0 DETAIL**

##### ***Scope of the review***

6.1 The scope of the review approved by members focussed on implementation of the SEN strategy, particularly in relation to the following key objectives,

- Ensuring early availability of support and thereby progressively reducing the level of statements
- Increasing ability to meet special educational needs within Brent's own provision to reduce the necessity for out-Borough placements
- Assisting all schools and nurseries to develop local inclusive provision for children with special needs

- Developing a wider role for special schools and additionally resourced provisions in providing advice and support to mainstream schools.

6.2 A self-assessment report was completed as part of the review previous consultation exercise process performance against key indicators. This drew upon the recent LEA Ofsted report. An independent report was also commissioned specifically for the review which was carried out by a consultant from Tribal Ltd.

### 6.3 Review panel

The review panel met for 2 days in July 2004. The panel consisted of Cllr. Helga Gladbaum (Chair) Karin McDougall (Policy Officer) Maureen Eade (Independent Expert) Cllr. Richard Harrod (Scrutiny Rep) Paul Bartlett (Stakeholder) attended for part of this review.

The panel interviewed a wide range of stakeholders including LEA Officers, headteachers, parents and representatives from other relevant agencies.

The findings of the review panel and their recommendation are appended in full as Appendix 1 to this report.

## ***Implementation of the Action Plan***

6.4 The LEA Action plan can be found in the Best Value review panel report (pages 41 to 51). Action has already been taken in relation to many of these recommendations and this is set out in the action plan. A key recommendation is the review of special school provision, setting out an action plan for the next 5 years (recommendation 2.1). The results of the review will be completed by the end of March 2004 and will be reported to members separately.

## **7.0 DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 This report is concerned with ensuring that the needs of pupils with a diverse range of special educational needs are effectively met. The proposals in this report have been screened by officers and they believe that the implementation of the proposals will have a positive impact on children with SEN and disabilities and promote their full and active participation in the wider community.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The following papers were used in the compilation of this report:-

- i) The Best Value panel report and LEA action plan (attached in full as Appendix 1).
- ii) Ofsted report on Brent LEA following Ofsted inspection in January 2003 (summary attached in Appendix 1).

- iii) Independent consultant's report from Tribal Ltd. Completed in June 2003 (summary attached in Appendix 1).
- iv) SEN Best Value self-assessment report completed in June 2003).

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact  
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