

# Consultation on the future of the Hearing Impairment Resource Unit at Rushy Meadow Primary Academy

**January 2018**

## Introduction

1. The London Borough of Sutton, in common with all other local authorities, is facing severe financial pressures. In this context, we have been reviewing our support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to ensure that we are targeting out resources of areas of greatest need. Over the past few months we have been reviewing all of our provision to better align our spending against needs. This has resulted in a number of proposals to, in some cases, increase provision whilst, in other areas, reducing or ceasing provision where demand has declined. These decisions are never easy but it is vital that we spend public money wisely and according to need. An initial round of informal public consultation took place on the draft SEN strategy between November and December 2017. The results of that consultation were shared with members on 4 January 2018 with a decision to proceed to formal consultation on some proposals including this one.
2. This paper outlines the options for the future of the Hearing Impairment Resource Unit at Rushy Meadow Primary Academy, with effect from 1st September 2018. All children currently attending the Unit will continue to receive their education, with support, at the school until their natural point of transfer.

## Background

3. Rushy Meadow Primary is an academy that hosts a Hearing Impairment Resource Unit offering up to 14 places for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs/Education Health and care plans. The academy receives enhanced funding to provide specialist resources and teaching expertise for pupils placed in the unit.
4. The number of Sutton pupils placed at the unit has remained reasonably consistent across the last 2-3 years and currently only 9-10 of the places are filled by Sutton children. There may be a number of reasons for this such as advances in technology or a more flexible approach to providing support, making it easier for young people to thrive in other schools. Currently, the majority of children of primary age with HI attend schools other than Rushy Meadow, with support, in accordance with their parents' wishes.

5. Nationally, many local authorities are changing the way they support children with hearing impairment, with an increasing proportion now being educated in mainstreams schools, with support, which is welcome. However, a small number may benefit from more intensive support, such as is available at Rushy Meadow.

## Proposal

6. In light of the above, 3 options are being considered for September 2018 onward. These are:
  - a) No change - to leave the number of commissioned places at 14
  - b) To reduce the number of commissioned places to a lower number to ensure that all pupils whose parents wish it can access a place, but not so many as to result in long term and costly unfilled places
  - c) To close the Unit to all new admissions from September 2018, whilst maintaining support for all existing pupils whose parents wish it.
7. Should option 3 be chosen it will still be possible for a child with HI to attend Rushy Meadow School, and to receive support in accordance with her/his EHCP.

## Staffing implications

8. Whichever option is chosen there will be a range of implications for current staff. If either option one or two is chosen, all staff will stay at the school, although duties may change to meet the school's needs. If option 3 is chosen, staff may still continue to be employed by the school, or may transfer to the centrally employed HI team, managed by Cognus.
9. Whichever option is chosen, we anticipate that all existing staff will continue to be employed. This is because, although the unit may reduce or close, we will continue to provide expert support to present and future generations of children in whichever school they attend.

## Pupil transition

10. As stated, all children currently at Rushy Meadow will continue their education at the school (unless parents wish otherwise) to the natural point of transfer. At present, only a small proportion of children at Rushy Meadow transfer to the Unit at Overton Grange. In future, prior to transfer, it is proposed that each child's Education Health & Care Plan will be amended, and that a secondary school will be named in accordance with parental preference. The EHCP will also state the level of support required to ensure the child or young person can access the curriculum.

## Finance and Resourcing

11. At present, each commissioned place at Rushy Meadow attracts £10,000, plus £4,291 top-up for each child who attends. A reduction in the number of places, or the closure of the Unit, will allow for more money to be available to support children in mainstream schools. The level of support needed will be written in to an amended EHCP before transfer.

## Have your say

12. The London Borough of Sutton, in partnership with the Cirrus Academy Trust, would like to know what parents in the area think about the proposal. We welcome comments and questions from parents or other interested parties regarding future provision for children with HI across the borough.
  - The Consultation period will open on 15th January 2018, and close on 12th February 2018.
  - There will be a meeting for parents and other interested parties on Thursday 1st February at 6.00pm at the School. You do not need to register your attendance.

## Next steps

13. Ultimately decisions on where to place pupils with SEN are taken by the Local Authority. It is anticipated that Councillors at the London Borough of Sutton will

consider the responses to the consultation and make a final decision on Wednesday 14th March 2018. Should members decide to either reduce the number of places, or to cease funding the unit, changes will come into effect in September 2018.

You can respond by:

1) Completing our online response form:

<https://sutton.citizenspace.com/chief-executives-group/consultation-on-the-future-of-the-hearing-impaired>

2) Completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document. You can email the form or print it, complete it and send it back to the Local Authority at the following address:

Olivia McKenna  
Floor 2, Civic Centre  
Sutton  
SM1 1EA

2) Emailing [Olivia.mckenna@sutton.gov.uk](mailto:Olivia.mckenna@sutton.gov.uk) directly

All responses will be shared with Cirrus Academy Trust

**All responses must be received by 12th February 2018**