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## **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS PROVISION IN EARLSTON**

**Report by Service Director Children & Young People**

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### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**24 May 2016**

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#### **1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

- 1.1 **The purpose of this report is to inform Elected Members of the preparation work which will now be carried out in advance of the opening of the Additional Support Needs provision in Earlston.**

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 **I recommend that the Executive Committee:-**

- (a) **Note that the Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision in Earlston is expected to open in January 2017.**
- (b) **Note the continuation of the following ASN provisions in the Scottish Borders:**

**Nursery/Primary Age Enhanced Provision:**

- i. **Early Learning and Childcare ASN Provision in Langlee.**
- ii. **Teviot Primary Complex Needs Provision situated in Wilton Primary School.**
- iii. **Eildon Primary Complex Needs Provision situated in Langlee Primary School.**
- iv. **Berwickshire Primary Complex Needs Provision situated in Chirnside Primary School (to be housed in the new Duns Primary School provision).**
- v. **Tweeddale Primary Complex Needs Provision situated in Halyrude Primary School.**

**Secondary Age Enhanced Provision:**

- i. **Teviot Secondary Complex Needs Provision situated in Hawick High School.**
- ii. **Eildon Secondary Complex Needs Provision situated in Galashiels Academy.**
- iii. **Berwickshire Secondary Complex Needs Provision situated in Berwickshire High School.**
- iv. **Tweeddale Secondary Complex Needs Provision situated in Peebles High School.**
- v. **Howdenburn Schoolhouse, Jedburgh**

- (c) Agree to informal engagement from May 2016, which shares the opportunities the Earlston provision presents, with:**
  - i. Children with profound and complex needs and their families.**
  - ii. The community of Earlston and the school communities of Earlston Primary School and Earlston High School.**
  - iii. Staff groups.**
  
- (d) Agree to informal engagement with the stakeholders above regarding the naming of the provision in Earlston.**
  
- (e) Bring relevant formal statutory consultation papers in respect of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to the Executive Committee in August 2016 regarding:**
  - i. The relocation of the existing provision of spectrum classes in Innerleithen Primary School and Wilton Primary School grounds.**
  - ii. The establishment of the new provision in Earlston.**

### 3 PROPOSAL AND BACKGROUND

#### Inclusion for All

- 3.1 In line with the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000 Scottish Borders Council (SBC) recognises the right of all children and young people to be educated alongside their peers in mainstream schools known as the presumption of mainstream. There is benefit to all children when the inclusion of pupils with additional support needs with their peers is well-supported within a positive ethos. SBC also acknowledges that the needs of some children may be best met through specialist provision and that parents' views must be taken into account when it comes to the matter of school placement. To fulfil our duties SBC must have both high quality universal school provision and specialist provision able to meet the learning, support and care needs of our children with complex needs. In 2015 as part of the re-structuring within the Children and Young People's Directorate it was recognised that additional support needs would be best returning to education line management from social work to drive forward the performance of our inclusion quality indicators. This resulted in a renewed strategic approach with key messages aimed at delivering high quality 'Inclusion for All'. Clear expectations were set out for all our schools to develop inclusive practice fit for purpose for the whole range of children with additional support needs from mild to moderate to complex and profound (definitions in Appendix 1).
- 3.2 In our discussions with Headteachers, including engagement sessions where we invited the Headteacher of the school with the best inclusion outcomes in Scotland to present their success, we heard how to improve practice and the following priorities were identified as part of an 'Inclusion for All' commitment:  
Together we will:
- a) Create an ethos of achievement for all pupils within a climate of high expectation.
  - b) Value a broad range of talents, abilities and achievements.
  - c) Promote success and self-esteem by taking action to remove barriers to learning.
  - d) Counter conscious and unconscious discrimination that may prevent individuals, or pupils from any particular groups, from thriving in their education.
  - e) Actively promoting understanding and a positive appreciation of the diversity of individuals and groups within society.
- 3.3 It was identified that there were key areas for consideration in taking forward the 'Inclusion for All' commitment :
- a) Reduction in transport time for learners.
  - b) Ensure flexibility and respond directly to all learners' needs.
  - c) A 3-18 approach ensuring effective transitions and progression in

learning, with early intervention.

- d) Enhanced secondary provisions which facilitate a broad range of opportunities for attainment, achievement and skills for learning, life and work.
- e) Staff up-skilled to meet the needs of all learners.
- f) Responsive model.
- g) Holistic view of the child/young person.

3.4 A significant shift in culture has been achieved in a short period of time. We have moved forward significantly since the beginning of the academic year, with a 'hearts and mind' change in our schools. We have examples of schools becoming more inclusive, not excluding pupils and developing key strengths in supporting a wide variety of vulnerable young people. There is a real philosophical and cultural shift in school leaders who have not only demonstrated a commitment to 'inclusion for all' but have delivered outcomes which indicate much more inclusive practice. As a result our schools are better equipped to respond to children with additional support needs. However, we are ambitious to deliver the highest quality of service in meeting the needs of all learners including those with additional support needs and this will continue to be a key priority in all our improvement plans, eg staff training and professional learning is a key focus moving forward including the development of specialist expertise and support in key areas such as visual/hearing impairment.

**Model for Enhanced Educational Provisions for Children with Additional Support Needs(ASN)**

3.5 In Scottish Borders Council we do not currently have "special" or "ASN" schools. However, we have a wide range of enhanced learning provisions which are designed to meet the needs of our learners with complex and profound needs, for those parents who make the choice to have their children educated in a specialist provision to best meet the needs of their child. Through the service moving to a more responsive model with highly skilled practitioners, we will develop the quality of all provisions. Our model for meeting the needs of our learners with complex and profound needs is through shared placements in our enhanced provisions and the pupil's mainstream school. These enhanced provisions are now governed and monitored within the same Quality Improvement frameworks as mainstream schools.

3.6 Nationally, almost all children with ASN are expected to receive their Early Learning and Childcare in a local setting with support. In the Scottish Borders that does happen in the main. Originally Langlee Special Needs Nursery was set up for non-ambulant pre-school children with complex needs. Recently Langlee has received the majority of referrals from the Eildon area, whereas nursery children with complex needs across the Borders have attended local nurseries with support. Moving forward, Wilton Complex Needs Primary provision, Langlee Primary Complex Needs provision and the ASN provision in the new Duns Primary School will all have enhanced environments, where we will develop ASN links across the Nursery

and the Primary Complex Needs provision. At nursery level it is about considering the individual needs of the child, the family circumstances and creating a local package of support and staff expertise. This is likely to result in the child being supported in a mainstream nursery with links to the enhanced complex primary needs provision, but could lead to a placement in any of the Complex Needs provisions, if this is deemed appropriate to meet the needs of the child, eg if there was a sizeable peer group for the child.

3.7 We currently have four primary age enhanced provisions:

- a) Teviot Primary Complex Needs Provision situated in Wilton Primary School.
- b) Eildon Primary Complex Needs Provision situated in Langlee Primary School.
- c) Berwickshire Primary Complex Needs Provision situated in Chirnside Primary School (to be housed in the new Duns Primary School provision when it opens).
- d) Tweeddale Primary Complex Needs Provision situated in Halyrude Primary School.

3.8 Although all our secondary schools are inclusive and do provide for children with complex and profound learning needs, we also have ASN bases for complex and profound learners that mirror the Primary Schools in location. This provides strong transitions for our vulnerable learners into a 3-18 targeted model for delivery of support and curricular progression. The other five Secondary Schools continue to be inclusive to all learners, taking into account the presumption of mainstream access. This is supported by a 3-18 universal support model, including support for learning teachers, the behaviour support service and a range of partners, eg health, social work, community learning and development and the police.

3.9 The Secondary Schools with dedicated enhanced provisions are:

- a) Teviot Secondary Complex Needs Provision situated in Hawick High School.
- b) Eildon Secondary Complex Needs Provision situated in Galashiels Academy.
- c) Berwickshire Secondary Complex Needs Provision situated in Berwickshire High School.
- d) Tweeddale Secondary Complex Needs Provision situated in Peebles High School.

- 3.10 We also have specialist provision available in Howdenburn Schoolhouse in Jedburgh. This provision currently provides life skills for S5 and S6 pupils with a range of moderate and complex needs who currently attend their local secondary school and enhanced secondary provisions. The young people practise their skills for learning, life and work and attend the Schoolhouse a few sessions per week.
- 3.11 In 2014 the Scottish Government set out clear ambitions within the 'Developing the Young Workforce' strategy which is fundamentally about ensuring a work relevant educational experience for our young people. It is about all of us valuing and understanding what a rich blend of learning, including vocational education, can offer. It is about employers playing an active role, both shaping and benefiting from Scotland's education system by helping to create the talent pool they need and recruiting young employees. Ultimately, it is about the future workforce, all our young people, making informed and ambitious choices about jobs and careers, ready to take their place in the world as effective contributors. In Scottish Borders we identified how we would deliver the ambitions within 'Developing the Young Workforce' within our 'Senior Phase Strategy'. Every secondary school has focused on this priority and significant progress has been made. The capacity of each school to provide appropriate vocational learning experiences for our children with additional support needs has improved. Although Howdenburn Schoolhouse has continued to support a small group of young people in developing their skills for learning, life and work it has to be acknowledged that the young people, who are all on shared placements and attend a provision within a secondary school will now be offered a skills for learning, life and work experience within their enhanced provision as part of the secondary school's 'Developing the Young Workforce' programme. We must now consider how 'Developing the Young Workforce' strategy and the provision at Howdenburn Schoolhouse could be developed to ensure there are clear pathways for skills development and work experience opportunities for our learners with complex needs. We must also involve our partners to ensure these pathways link into adult learning and employability or further education.

### **Improving and Developing our Additional Support Needs Provision**

#### **3.12 New Additional Support Needs Provision in Earlston**

In 2013 SBC identified the need to develop a full time purpose built specialist education and care centre for young people with complex needs, both physical and learning within the Scottish Borders. At the Executive Committee on 17 January 2013 it was agreed to develop a central Borders Additional Support Needs (ASN) provision. It was recommended that the location be in Central Borders to increase accessibility and to reduce travelling times for children. The aim of the Additional Support Needs provision is to offer a service that will reduce the number of children who access very specialist provision out of the Scottish Borders and prevent the need for children to be educated outside the authority, as well as provide an enhanced level of provision for our children with the most profound and complex needs within the Scottish Borders. Baseline information intimated that our outwith educational placements were above the national average. The educational and well-being benefits of having this specialist provision have been identified as follows:

- a) A purpose built learning environment which provides our children and

young people with profound and complex needs with an environment which will support their learning and their well-being.

- b) Reduce travelling times for children.
- c) Enhance opportunities for partner agencies to provide specialist services to our children with profound and complex needs, eg health services.
- d) A staff team who will specialise in meeting the learning needs of our children and young people with the most profound and complex needs and can offer advice, guidance and professional learning opportunities for their colleagues.
- e) Nearby Primary and Secondary provisions which will create further skills for learning, life and work opportunities within the child's individual learning plan.
- f) Support to services already provided in locality enhanced support provisions, mainstream schools and outreach specialist teams.
- g) Maximise the potential for integration in mainstream and better transition planning to adulthood services.
- h) Reduction in the need for some children and young people to be placed outwith Scottish Borders for their education.

3.13 At the Executive Committee in 2013 it was intimated that the Earlston provision is suitable to meet the Social, Emotional and Behavioural Needs (SEBN) of the small number of young people unable to be met within mainstream education; this matter was to be the subject of a further report. However, it is important to note that there has been significant progress in meeting the needs of children with social, emotional and behavioural needs within our mainstream schools with the creation of bases such as the Connect Zone within Galashiels Academy, the Connect Base in Hawick High School and inclusive approaches developing across all Secondary Schools. A focus on inclusive practice has also had an impact upon success in supporting children with SEBN in all our Primary Schools. For example, the early intervention and nurturing schools approach at Burnfoot Primary School has led to dramatic reductions in exclusions to zero in school session 2015/16 and a significant reduction of referrals to the Behaviour Support Service, as the change in practice has impacted upon the school's approach and capacity to support children with SEBN within the school.

3.14 The current SEBN resource is a service which is responsive to the needs of children and young people. It operates out of Wilton Centre in Hawick offering in-reach and outreach support to children and young people. The service has to be responsive as some children require support in their existing schools and some benefit from spending some time in the Wilton Centre. The Wilton Centre will continue alongside the focus on developing inclusive practice in our schools to provide children with SEBN with appropriate support.

3.15 The additional support needs provision in Earlston will offer education for our children with the most complex and profound needs. We must recognise that we have families who will wish for their child to be educated in their

locality and have connections with their local education provision. To this end it is important to note that we have existing enhanced ASN provision within the Scottish Borders and to make any changes to these would have to be consulted upon within the guidance set out in the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010. This report sets out how we wish to engage with a range of appropriate stakeholders prior to any formal consultation regarding possible changes to existing provision whilst making families aware of the choice that will be open to them with the opening of the provision at Earlston in 2017. Appendix 2 outlines our current provision and proposed future provision.

- 3.16 Scottish Borders Council, in building the provision at Earlston, is responding to concerns raised about the existing provision for the Primary 1-4 children with autistic spectrum needs and profound complex needs who are located within a portacabin in the grounds of Wilton Primary School, and the Primary 4-7 children in a basic classroom in Innerleithen. Although all of the children are on shared placements, it was recognised that they need purpose built provision. This provision will initially be for the primary aged children currently attending the existing provisions in the spectrum classes in St Ronan's, Innerleithen and in the grounds of Wilton Primary School. The new provision at Earlston, will not only house the children who will be re-located from the existing spectrum classes but will also be able to support children with complex needs not only on the Autistic Spectrum but also those children who may have complex sensory impairments and be on placements outwith Scottish Borders.
- 3.17 At the time of the development of the new build, brief engagement with families did take place with current families accessing provision at St Ronan's and Wilton who are now expecting their children to access the provision at Earlston. We have also had discussions with parents who have children in specialised placements outwith the Borders and they are positive about accessing the new provision at Earlston too. All staff members within the existing spectrum classes are line managed by one team leader and they too are aware of the provision at Earlston and expect to be based there.

#### The Provision

- 3.18 Visual images of the provision at Earlston are attached in Appendix 3. The provision has been designed to provide flexible and adaptable spaces. There are 3 large classrooms, all with direct access to safe outdoor space. An activity space which is the same size as the classrooms provides opportunities for practical experiences and arts/crafts. There are several smaller rooms which are intended for small groups or individuals to access meetings, therapy and tuition.
- 3.19 The building also features a breakout space which can support the development of lifeskills and independent learning in a café style space which has provision for kitchen workspace and equipment. The sensory/soft play space will be fitted out with equipment for specialised therapy. All these areas will be tailored to provide the best conditions for learning possible for the pupils attending and the décor and soft furnishings are being carefully planned to suit learning needs. As well as a welcoming reception area, appropriate ancillary accommodation for hygiene, administration and storage is provided. The large outdoor space is secure and will be landscaped to provide safe play, multi-sensory experience and attractive surroundings. Parking for staff is available onsite and there will be a safe area for pupil drop off and collection. Pupils attending the provision will be



able to access wider facilities, if required, and in liaison with the staff team at Earlston Primary School.

- 3.20 The provision will provide a first class learning environment for our children with complex and profound needs. The accommodation will provide us with an opportunity to develop our staff skill set in areas such as visual and hearing impairment, as well as creating a sensory environment tailored to non-verbal communication approaches as well as verbal.

#### Engagement with Stakeholders

- 3.21 It is proposed that engagement takes place in May and June 2016 with:

- a) Children with profound and complex needs and their families attending Innerleithen and Wilton spectrum provision and families attending external provision.
- b) The community of Earlston, the Community Council of Earlston and the school communities of Earlston Primary School and Earlston High School.
- c) The school communities of Innerleithen Primary School and Wilton Primary School.
- d) Staff groups.

- 3.22 Engagement will include:

- a) A newsletter informing stakeholders of the provision opening at Earlston: the aims, the purpose, the service, the facilities, the educational benefits.
- b) Attendance at Parent Council Meetings.
- c) Attendance at Community Council Meetings.
- d) An invitation to attend a 'find out more and have your say' open event in Earlston Primary School, Wilton Spectrum Provision and Innerleithen Spectrum Provision.

- 3.23 The Eildon Complex Needs Enhanced Provision base in Galashiels Academy currently has complex and profound secondary aged young people. This provision has expanded in recent years and an extra class has successfully developed which currently provides for our children with learning needs very well. It is expected that the children at Earlston would transition to this provision in Galashiels and that staff would develop close links and specialisms. The provision in Galashiels Academy is very successfully meeting the needs of the secondary aged young people with spectrum and complex sensory additional support needs. It is also recognised that some children may transition to the enhanced secondary provision in their locality. Both the Earlston and the Galashiels provisions will also provide a base for outreach, training and resources to help maintain children within their own community, which will up-skill, staff, and ensure that children learn their skills for life in their local settings and continue to be a part of their own communities as well as receive specialist support in the provisions. In response to concerns about the quality of the fabric and attractiveness of the

provision at Galashiels Academy, we have identified investment opportunities which will result in the upgrading of the provision in 2016/17.

#### Next Steps

- 3.24 During the proposed engagement activities set out above we will have been able to provide key stakeholders with information which will reassure them that the provision at Earlston will provide a first class learning environment for our children with complex and profound needs currently attending spectrum classes at St Ronan's and Wilton. By August 2016 we will have had an opportunity to outline how the provision will support the development of staff skills in areas such as visual and hearing impairment as well as enhance our delivery of education to children on the autistic spectrum. We will have had an initial discussion with all stakeholders about the naming of the provision which will guide us in preparing statutory consultation papers regarding the establishment of the new provision.
- 3.25 In August 2016 we will then bring relevant formal statutory consultation papers in respect of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to the Executive in August 2016 regarding:
- a) The re-location of the existing provision of the spectrum classes in Innerleithen Primary School and Wilton Primary School grounds.
  - b) The establishment and naming of the new provision in Earlston.

## **4 IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Financial**

- a) The provision at Earlston is within the approved capital plan and is profiled to match the construction programme:
  - 2015/2016- 481 k
  - 2016/2017- 1156 k
  - 2017/2018 – 6 k
- b) The revenue consequences of the new facility are being fully developed. It is anticipated these will be met from within existing budgets by transferring existing costs within the current spectrum provisions and within the overall ASN design process. There may be savings from reduced travel costs for pupils who currently require transport outwith the Authority. If pupils who might otherwise be placed outside of the Authority to meet their educational needs choose to stay within the Authority in the new facility ,then significant savings would be accrued as external placement costs are significantly higher than our own placements.

### **4.2 Risk and Mitigations**

- (a) There is a risk that parents continue to request to place children outwith the Authority. This risk is mitigated by consulting as widely as possible with parents of children who may be able to benefit from the facility.

- (b) It is important that parents in the Borders believe that we have the facilities and highly skilled staff to meet the needs of our children with complex needs or it creates reputational risk and anxiety for parents. The provision at Earlston highlights our investment in this vulnerable group of learners and will reassure parents of our commitment to getting it right for every child with complex needs.

#### 4.3 **Equalities**

The provision at Earlston will have a positive impact upon children and young people within the Scottish Borders irrespective of age, gender, ability, by providing fully accessible Borders based facilities for a very vulnerable group of learners.

#### 4.4 **Acting Sustainably**

The provision at Earlston aims to provide families who have children with complex needs with service level provision which will support them in educating their children within the Scottish Borders and prevent them from considering living elsewhere.

#### 4.5 **Carbon Management**

There may be a slightly negative effect on carbon emissions by increasing the Council's building footprint however, this is mitigated by a reduction in the number and frequency of journeys by young people being transported out of the Scottish Borders as a consequence of the recommendations, which will have a positive impact on the Council's Carbon footprint.

#### 4.6 **Rural Proofing**

This report does not propose any changes to any existing policies or strategy with regards to rurality. We transport learners with additional support needs to local schools or enhanced provisions. We would expect that the links between the primary and secondary enhanced provisions and the centrality of the new provision in Earlston will ensure that learner transport journeys are reduced including those children living designated rural areas.

#### 4.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes proposed to the Scheme of Administration or Scheme of delegation.

### **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR, and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the final report.

**Approved by**

**Donna Manson**  
**Service Director Children & Young People**

**Signature .....**

**Author(s)**

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Donna Manson	Service Director Children and Young People

**Background Papers:**

Developing the Young Workforce, Scottish Government 2014

**Previous Minute Reference:**

Social Work and Housing Committee, March 2013 : Item 11 –Complex Needs Options Appraisal

Social Work and Housing Committee , March 2014 : Item 8 – Complex Needs Education Base Update

Executive Committee, May 2014: Item 6 – Complex Needs Education Base Preferred Site

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Scottish Borders Council Additional Support Needs Definitions

Appendix 2 – Our proposed plan for ASN provision in the Scottish Borders

Appendix 3 – Earlston Complex Needs Provision, new build images

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Donna Manson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells TD6 0SA, Tel 01835 824000.