

Special Provision capital fund update and plans for the increased funding allocation.

Following the government announcement of a further increase to the Special provision capital fund the total allocation now stands at £848,837.

The original allocational and subsequent increases were as follows:

Special Provision Capital fund allocation.

Original Allocation.	£500,000
May 2018 increase.	£116,279
December 2018 increase.	<u>£232,588</u>
Total allocation	<u><u>£848,867</u></u>

From the original review and consultation, the management group determined that the following main recommendation remained the priority and would continue to be progressed. The increase in the funding allocated, whilst considerable in terms of a percentage increase, was not significant in terms of the amount when compared to neighbouring authorities and allocations made from the fund nationally. I was considered that the additional funding may actually make the plans more financially viable.

Recommendation – Develop a Mixed Model of Specialist Satellite Sites along with Mainstream-led Resourced Provision In keeping with the feedback from the majority of respondents, a mixed model of provision is recommended allowing for both mainstream and specialist provider led models.

Where mainstream schools are ‘Good’ or better at Ofsted and where they have demonstrated an inclusive ethos, then they should be supported to develop and manage this provision. In order to support this there should be a Service Level Agreement underpinning the terms of the agreement (covering admission process and entry criteria, funding, etc).

Progress to date.

Since the original development plan was consulted on and approved, two rounds of hub development have occurred following on from site identification exercises. In this process schools were invited to express interest in hosting a SEND hub. Following initial expressions of interest, all sites received a site visit and a series of meetings to discuss the suitability of both the school building and the overall appropriateness of location to host a hub. If a site was deemed suitable then a financial viability assessment was undertaken, the assessment looks at both the current school budget status and also how much capital investment is required to make the appropriate adjustments. A notional allocation of £5,000 capital per

pupil place was originally agreed meaning that a 10-place hub would attract up to £50,000 capital investment with a further allocation for equipment and resources.

It was determined that the capital expenditure would have to be capped at the level of special provision capital grant received and that only where a school identified additional funding to contribute to the proposal, would the budget exceed this. A significant revenue allocation has been set aside to ensure that all hubs are suitably resourced prior to opening and a comprehensive training programme has been provided at no cost to any school that agrees to be a host for a hub.

All these are at a significant additional cost to the council. No provision has been made available to forward fund the capital expenditure so the money can only be spent in line with the DfE payments to Shropshire Council so expenditure beyond £282,958 per annum can only occur if underspends have occurred in previous years.

Following this process following hubs have been opened:

School	Location	Phase	Number of Places
Sir John Talbot	Whitchurch	Secondary	12 (at this time)
Whittington Primary	Oswestry	Primary	10
St. Andrews	Shrewsbury	Primary	10
St. Mary's Bluecoat	Bridgnorth	Primary	12
Shrewsbury Cathedral	Shrewsbury	Primary	4
TOTAL			48

And the following remain under development or consideration for opening in the near future:

- St Lawrence Primary School, Church Stretton
- Church Stretton Secondary School, Church Stretton
- Shrewsbury College Group (Post 16 provision)

Each of the above schools is at various stages of discussions, should hubs be developed this would potentially create around an additional 60 places to bring the total number of places created from the fund to 108.

On-going development and next stages:

As previously discussed, two development rounds have now been undertaken and resulted in 5 hubs opening and further developments being progressed. During the first two rounds a number of other options have been considered and discounted mainly due to affordability

issues, whilst some potential hub hosts were put off by the limited capital funding that was available and the current uncertainty surrounding whole school budgets and the future of SEND funding.

With the additional £232,000 that we have been awarded we will continue with the approved strategy to develop hub-based provision. We now intend to directly target secondary providers in the south of the Shropshire, which, so far have proved difficult to get involved.

All current schemes have required the identification of existing space in the school, either classroom space or, in one school, the conversion of a staff room. This has been a hugely limiting factor, requiring schools to either be under capacity or fortunate enough to have none classroom space that can be sacrificed to be converted. As a result, some schools, who initially expressed an interest to be involved, withdrew simply because they were unable to find appropriate space in their schools to host a hub. The additional funding will allow us to consider options that require additional space to be provided as part of the scheme, either via construction or the purchase of demountable spaces and revisit some schools that previously withdrew.