

## DECISION RECORD

Decision Ref. No.  
B054/23

Officer Key Decisions are subject to the Council's Call-In Procedure (Annex 9 of the Council's Constitution <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/who-we-are-and-what-we-do.aspx>)

**Subject:** Proposal to consult on the opening of a new Primary Support Base in South Oxhey from 15 April 2024

Staff Contact: Phil Brunt, Senior Planning Officer  
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Tel: 01992 5588437

Executive Member: Terry Douris

Portfolio: Executive Member for Education, Libraries and Lifelong Learning

### 1. Decision

To initiate a public consultation on proposals to consult on the opening of a new PSB for DSPL9 (Watford, Three Rivers, Bushey and Radlett) in South Oxhey, which would be a HCC provision. The PSB would be located at 38 Oxhey Drive, Watford, WD19 7EN and we would commission the lead school for primary behaviour in the area (Warren Dell) to run the service.

### 2. Reasons for the decision

Since the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions we have seen a significant increase in permanent exclusions. The number of children receiving support from our Education Support for Medical Absence Team has increased from 120 children in July 2019 to 245 in July 2022. The increase in Education Health and Care Plans has contributed to the increase in demand for independent placements and special school places which has resulted in increased pressure on the high needs budget. By providing in-reach services in areas of the county without existing provision, more children will receive the support they require.

Each of the six existing in-reach provisions are operating at capacity and are unable to offer places outside the local area. It is also not appropriate for primary age children to be travelling extensively to reach provision and any such transport would be more strain on the home to school transport budget.

SEND Ofsted Inspection are focussing on the increase in exclusions and children with EHCPs out of school and not receiving a full-time education. By opening this new provision in DSPL9 we will be able to provide more children in this area of the county

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with short-term intensive in-reach placements and support reintegration to mainstream school.

In-reach services are an essential part of the graduated response to meet the needs of children at risk of exclusion. A successful twelve-week (average) placement would result in the child being integrated back into a mainstream setting, reduce the risk of exclusion and improve outcomes for the child. This proposal would also reduce the demand for SEMH special school places and costly independent specialist provision.

### **3. Alternative options considered and rejected**

None

### **4. Consultation**

#### (a) Comments of Executive Member

The Executive Member has no comments other than to concur with the Executive Director's intention to agree the proposal.

#### (b) Comments of other consultees

None

### **5. Following consultation with, and the concurrence of the Executive Member, I am proceeding with the proposed decision.**

Signed: Jo Fisher

Title: Executive Director of Children's Services

Date: 4 May 2023

### **6. Copies of agreed document to:**

- Elaine Shell, Democratic Services Manager, Room 213, Old Block, County Hall (signed paper original).  
Electronic copy to: [Democratic.Services@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic.Services@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

and following the expiry of the call-in period to:

- Executive Member - Councillor Terry Douris
- Local Members – County Councillor Christopher Alley
- The Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Chair County Councillor David Andrews, and Vice-Chairs, County Councillors Richard Butler and Sandy Walkington
- The governing board of Warren Dell (email to head teacher to forward to the Chair of Governors for distribution to governing board members)
- The local Church of England diocese - Canon David Morton, Diocesan Director of Education, Diocese of St Albans ([dde@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:dde@stalbans.anglican.org))

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- The local Roman Catholic diocese - Mr Peter Sweeney, Director of Education, Diocese of Westminster (petersweeney@rcdow.org.uk)