

Significant Funding Pressures – 2009 Business Plan

Department: Education, Sport and Culture

Description of Funding Pressure:

Social Inclusion/Mont a l'Abbe School

The funding pressure which is both unavoidable and volatile, is due to:-

- *An overall increase in the complex needs of children due to increased neo-natal survival of children with profound and multiple handicaps, resulting in increased staffing needs;*
- *An increasing number of pupils are wheelchair users, each taking up the equivalent of 3 minibus places. An additional vehicle, with associated driver and escort staff has become necessary;*
- *An increase in the statutory age of education to 19 for children with special needs. As a result, pupils remain in the school for an additional year, with associated staffing needs, which also involves supported work placement;*
- *More parents of children with special needs request that their children be educated in a mainstream environment to allow for integration into the local community, in line with the States of Jersey policy of promoting social inclusion. This requires support from Mont a l'Abbe staff to help mainstream colleagues extend their expertise in differentiating to greater individual learning needs;*
- *Families arriving in the Island whose children already have statements of special need support from the UK (eg a Year 9 student requiring individual support due to extreme physical fragility)*
- *Acquired needs due to trauma (eg a Year 5 pupil who is a blind wheelchair user rehabilitating following a medical accident, requiring individual support)*

It should be noted that Jersey educates all children with profound and multiple learning difficulties on Island, which is more cost-effective provision compared to Guernsey and most UK Local Authorities where severe cases are educated in independent UK special schools at costs which can well exceed £100,000 a year per pupil.

Why not included in 2008 Business Plan:

The headteacher at Mont a l'Abbe school has attempted to continue to operate the school within minimum acceptable standards, however the cumulative impact of the factors detailed above have begun to impact on the level of special needs provision at the school. The immediate and unpredictable demands caused by the last two factors in particular, have placed considerable pressure on the school in an environment where the complexity of need is increasing. The school has had to rely on the goodwill and co-operation of staff and local charitable organisations, which can no longer be sustained.

A thorough review of the special needs requirement of the pupils at Mont a l'Abbe has been carried out within a banded funding methodology based on levels of need, and a shortfall has been calculated at £370,000.

Link to Strategic Plan Objective:

Vision – “We are an inclusive society where everyone has equality of opportunity and access to the services they need”

Commitment Three: “ We will promote a safe just and equitable society”

Commitment Six: “We will ensure that States services are necessary, efficient and of good quality”

Impact of Funding Pressure not being introduced:

- Transport not available for children who need it and buses overcrowded - Absence / lateness due to family difficulties in getting children to school. Health & safety issues – risk of injury to pupils / escort / driver;
- Teachers supervise instead of taking lunch break / preparing for afternoon lessons - Breach of employment law. Overtired staff leading to increased sickness absence. Inadequate preparation for lessons;
- Staff not trained in physical handling (restraint) techniques - Injuries to staff / pupils. Breach of Health & Safety regulations. Potential legal implications;
- Staff not trained / kept up to date in specialist educational interventions - Children's special educational needs specified on Records of Need not addressed. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining high quality staff;
- Management deployed for class cover and crisis management - No school representation at Child Protection Case Conferences or other multi-agency meetings. Class teachers unable to attend pupil Annual Review (RoN) meetings. No school development planning;
- No personnel 'front of house' at Haute Vallee site - Security issues. Staff required to leave their class. Reduced availability for educational duties / overwork leading to sickness absence;
- Reduced quality of educational experience, pupils cannot access school activities and children's educational needs not met;
- Children excluded from local school communities - Social inclusion compromised leading to parental complaints;
- Pupils denied access to educational programmes not available at Mont a L 'Abbe. Mont a L'Abbe students discriminated against - Pupils do not gain qualifications they are capable of. Adult independence compromised. Social inclusion compromised. Parental complaints / politically sensitive;
- Mainstream schools unsupported and unable to differentiate curriculum appropriately, reluctant to include pupils with complex learning difficulties - Children's special educational needs not met. Children vulnerable to behaviour difficulties / suspension. Parental complaints.

Revenue Implications: £000		Capital Implications: £000	
2009	£370 ongoing	2009	
2010		2010	
2011		2011	
2012 onwards		2012 onwards	

Manpower Implications (FTE): 2 x 0.5 Teachers / 5 x Teaching Assistants**Other financial or resource considerations: (impact on other depts?)**

- Children unable to develop independence and ability to communicate with mainstream peers will become dependent adults who will impact on services for the duration of their lives;
- Children who do not have the opportunities to experience college/supported work placements are less likely to become employable;
- Mainstream children who have minimal contact with special needs are unlikely to develop an understanding as they become the workforce of tomorrow.

Options for Funding within Department:

The Management Team at ESC recognised this as an immediate priority and was able to divert a sum of £200,000 to meet the shortfall in 2008 on a short term basis, by agreeing to delay certain planned initiatives:

- a one year delay in a number of initiatives associated with the implementation of the Youth Service Strategy,
- a planned delay in recruitment to posts within the Projects and Planning

Division which will be required to meet the demands on formulating a five year Strategy and in progressing a number of essential projects (eg due to demographic changes);

- *a change in the book purchasing policy at the Public Library which can only be sustained for one year;*
- *by diverting income generated from the Active Card Membership Scheme which will leave a shortfall in the funds required for programmed equipment replacement, which can only be sustained for one year without impacting on the quality of the Scheme.*

It is essential that the budgets are replaced from 2009.

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