Stepping Stones is a three to five year transformational programme for support and services for children with additional needs. Since March 2010 a programme management approach has been adopted, and over the past 17 months significant changes have taken place. This document sets out to review progress and future direction for Stepping Stones. This is particularly pertinent because of the changing political and financial environment, and because the present programme manager is leaving.

This strategy has been produced by Devon County Council and Devon Primary Care Trust for Devon Children’s Trust.

Devon Children’s Trust is a partnership between social care, education, health, community, voluntary and justice services working together to make a difference for Devon’s children and young people.

For more information about this strategy contact:

Devon County Council
John Shaw
Strategic Commissioner for Children with Additional Needs

Devon Primary Care Trust
Gwen Pearson
Children’s Commissioner, Devon PCT

Contents

The past
1. Background
2. The vision
3. Programme objectives
4. Programme management and development

The present
1. Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)
2. Primary strands
3. Secondary strands
4. Special schools
5. Cross-sector work streams

The future
1. What does Stepping Stones offer?
2. The strength of a child-centred approach
3. Focusing on identifying and meeting needs
4. Funding pressures and priorities
5. Strategic leadership, strategic commissioning and the partnership between schools and Devon County Council
6. Local delivery, co-ordination and accountability
7. Partnership working in a mixed economy – academies and free schools
8. Interdependencies
1. Background

In common with many other local authorities, we recognised that against changing patterns and numbers of children with additional needs, and a tightening financial climate, a strategic review was needed to make the most effective and efficient use of resources.

The Stepping Stones programme will:
- improve provision for children with special needs
- increase capacity in Devon special schools for supporting children with complex special educational needs (SEN)
- improve the support offered to all children with special needs with the objective of allocating resources best suited to needs as early as possible.

Although Stepping Stones’s focus is on children with additional needs, it is a first principle of the programme that it is rooted in the needs of all children. It is ultimately unhelpful to plan services for individuals with identified additional needs separately from the services provided for all. This also accords with a principle of the Devon Children’s Trust to prioritise early intervention, and to link to structures that can address difficulties at a ‘lower’ level on the continuum of provision. It also emphasises the role of mainstream schools and promotes inclusion.

Prioritising services for individuals with additional needs is part of Devon County Council’s Strategic Plan. Responses underpinned by Stepping Stones will promote:
- provision close to home
- fewer disruptions for children
- increased achievement through personalised programmes
- a continued reduction in exclusions.

2. The vision

We aim to make sure that all children and young people in Devon have their needs identified and met by the schools, services and communities that are in place to support their growth and development.

Stepping Stones is a three to five year strategic programme which will adjust current services to achieve this vision. It will require a continuum of provision developed in all parts of Devon to ensure equal access.

The quality of the delivered practice, and the processes that underpin it, will be second to none. Resources will be used in the most efficient way, and decisions about how resources can achieve the best possible outcome will be made as locally as possible, within an overall strategic commissioning framework.
3. Programme objectives

Mainstream schools, and the environment of families and communities, meet the educational and social needs of most children. However, some will have additional needs, which the continuum of provision must be able to respond to.

We intend to secure access to services and provision in a child’s Local Learning Communities (LLC) wherever possible. But we recognise that some children with complex needs will need access to specialist support in additionally resourced provision, or special schools that may serve more than one community, and the provision planned must encompass this need.

Stepping Stones will promote early intervention, and explore at every opportunity how interventions targeted earlier and at a lower level will prevent the escalation of need over an individual’s lifetime.

4. Programme management and development

Since March 2009 we have:
• developed a clear programme management structure which supports monthly reporting to identify progress and issues
• developed a shared vision across schools, Children and Young People’s Services (CYPS) and any other services supporting and working with children and young people
• built up a momentum for change among partners
• identified the priority projects, driven these forward and identified subsequent priorities for the next phase
• developed formal and informal communication routes
• developed new structures for delivering services through a process of formative consultation with stakeholders
• started a step change in the way that resources are allocated to meet needs
• developed structures to ensure services are delivered locally
• promoted and developed working relationships to promote and deliver integrated working.

The programme has been delivered over four phases. These represent different emphases in terms of activities and developments. Review of the programme will formally take place at the end of each phase.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>April 2009 – August 2009</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where are we? Priority projects and planning.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>September 2009 – December 2009</th>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing it together - strategic planning Ensuring sustainability.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>December 2009 – September 2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Heart of changes Reallocating resources</td>
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<th>Phase 4</th>
<th>September 2010 – March 2011</th>
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<tr>
<td>Continued developments and evaluation of practice What happens next?</td>
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We are now coming to the end of Phase 3 – the initial delivery phase. The focus has been on delivering new structures and working practices across Devon in priority areas of development. Phase 4 which runs from September 2010 to March 2011, involves ensuring stability and sustainability of the initial priority projects, starting the next round of projects and evaluating where the programme will develop next.
The Present

This section describes where we are now and some of the next steps that have been instigated.

1. Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)

In EYFS Stepping Stones is being used to strategically align a number of work streams. This alignment focuses around three projects.

- Co-ordination of delivery structures pathways and resources - in particular this is looking to develop a much closer alignment with Nursery Plus workers and the Portage Service.
- The development of common assessment procedures throughout EYFS and links to assessment in later age groups - an audit of assessment pathways has been conducted. The next phase is to draw together the common assessment pathway and link this to post 0–5 assessment procedures.
- The development of Specialist Child Assessment Centres – developments have taken place in terms of capital builds but also in terms of specifications.
2. Primary strands

Developing the Primary Support Structures
A wide-ranging formative consultation process has taken place across Devon schools and other partners. Areas of development have emerged based on this feedback.

Delivery mechanisms will be different depending on the levels of delivery.

The development of support centres to meet high level needs
For children at the higher end of need there will be further development of support centres to support Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Behavioural, Emotional and Social Disorders (BESD) and Speech and Language difficulties.

These centres will be ‘area base provision’ – based in North, Central and East, and South and West - taking children out of their catchment areas. In the case of ASD and Speech and Language difficulties these will build on current practice and bases.

Present position of bases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational provision</th>
<th>Integrated children’s services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County wide</td>
<td>Special school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area level</td>
<td>Out of catchment support centres BESD, ASB, Sp &amp; L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AXS cluster level</td>
<td>Local primary support centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local learning community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small clusters of schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local children’s network</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present position of bases</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASD – Communication and Intercation Resource Bases (CAIRB)</td>
<td>Speech and Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnstaple – Newport Primary</td>
<td>Barnstaple – Orchard Vale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tavistock – Tavistock Primary</td>
<td>Exeter – Newtown Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivybridge - Manor Primary</td>
<td>South – commissioned from Torbay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiverton – Castle Primary</td>
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</table>
Communication and Interaction Resource Base (CAIRBs)
Agreed areas of development are to:
• continue to develop practice in the four primary CAIRBs, including implementing the new funding arrangements
• continue to develop the network of support around the primary CAIRB, including the links to special schools
• research the need for a fifth base, including the development of a business case.

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Disorders (BESD) support centres
These are a new development following consultation and identification of need. They will focus on assessment and intervention for children with high levels of need in this area. We will seek to further develop the business case for three bases across Devon.

Developing the three bases across Devon will involve:
• identifying primary schools to host the bases – this opportunity will be open to all schools
• developing the specification and working practice
• recruiting new staff
• developing buildings and using capital development
• developing the interface with local delivery and special schools.

Speech and Language support centres
These bases already exist and their focus is on Key Stage 1. They need further development, in particular the development of outreach services linked into a wider network of support. We propose to:
• develop the continued business case for these bases, including the use of the Torbay unit in South Devon
• redesign the specification for the Speech and Language bases (possibly Speech, Language and Communication Needs), in particular the possible outreach function
• clarify the placement of bases across Devon.

Present nurture groups
Six schools are presently funded to deliver nurture groups. No specifications, working practice or monitoring and evaluation systems have ever been in place. There needs to be serious consideration about the additional funding to these schools, as other schools have to provide this resource without additional funding. We have not conducted any detailed analysis of the benefits that these groups may have on outcomes and to remove this funding may have unforeseen consequences.

It has been agreed that in the next few months we will:
• evaluate the benefits of the nurture group funding in terms of a business case
• identify the issues if the funding is taken away
• make recommendations about the future of the nurture bases.
Primary schools currently supported with additional funding are:
- Countess Wear
- Great Torrington
- Ilfracombe Infants
- Inverteign
- Willowbrook
- Wynstream
- South Brent – ENABLE development.

The development of Local Children’s Networks
A key element of delivery to primary schools is the development of the Local Children’s Network and the Local Primary Support Centres. The links with other CYPS programmes and areas of work is extensive and includes:
- Integrated Children’s Services
- Achievement Through Collaboration
- AXS
- Extended Services in and around Schools.

We need to give a coherent and joined up picture and way forward. Not only is this necessary for good practice, but also reduces confusion about the changes. Options to deliver this are being discussed in CYPS.

Language Link and Speech Link
There is agreement that we will proceed with the purchase of Language and Speech Link and resources have been identified. There have been difficulties with procurement, and at present we are undergoing a tendering process. The earliest this process will end is November 2010 at which point roll out to schools can take place. Roll out mechanisms have been co-ordinated and agreed with Speech and Language Services.

3. Secondary strands

Personalised Alternative Curriculum Centres (PACCs)
The Pupil Referral Units and Link Education came together and formed the new PACCs on 19 April 2010. The PACCs are part of CYPS and the future positioning of the PACCs and their governance is explained in a paper presented to the Children with Additional Needs (CwAN) Commissioning Board in May 2010 and the Forum for Learning and Achievement (FLA) in June 2010. This paper presents some of the options in terms of the functions and governance of the PACCs and their future development.

Head teachers and leadership teams have been appointed, management committees have been drawn together and a two year development plan has been completed. Access to resources and admissions protocols have been developed and will link closely to the work of the County Special Educational Needs Team (CSET) and the resource allocation panels.

Work has also been done on building the relationship between the inclusion and reintegration officers, the present Behaviour and Attendance Partnership legislation, the reintegration panels and the PACCs. This developmental work will continue.
The PACCs are currently consulting on the name used to describe the functions and services they deliver. A re-launch of the name will take place in September 2010.

PACC capital developments
North Devon - we are designing and building a new PACC building in North Devon. This will be on the Roundswell site in Barnstaple with the New Day BESD provision and the Joint Agency Service. This will be completed in autumn 2011. At present the PACC services are mainly being delivered from the Tutorial Unit on St John's Lane and the Yeo Centre on St George’s Road, and this will continue until the new build is completed.

Exeter, Central and East - this PACC is presently working from the Avenue Learning Centre, the Grenville Centre and the Fountain Learning Centre which are all in Exeter. We are looking at developing provision at the Grenville end of the Ringswell site to bring some of these buildings together in a more coherent way. Planning for this is underway.

South and West Devon - we have identified a site for the Southern PACC in Dartington. We are now looking at how we can renovate some of the buildings to be able to work from here as soon as possible, as the service is currently being run from several locations including Windmill House in Totnes, Oak Valley in Paignton and Newton Abbot Racecourse. The long term intention is to further substantially develop these buildings to support the PACC delivery.

Local Area Base Partnerships (LABPs)
There is clear process of development for LABPs this includes a:
- needs and resources analysis
- partnership agreement framework
- memorandum of agreement framework with Devon County Council
- clear service level agreement and specification.

All secondary schools have now been consulted and the process of developing partnership agreements is moving forward. Schools themselves are deciding on the partnerships they enter into and there is still some movement in this area. The present arrangement of these partnerships means that there are likely to be 15 or 16 LABPs across Devon. School partnerships are in the process of recruiting staff and developing working practices. It is envisaged that there will be six LABPs in place in September 2010 with a further four after Christmas and others developing further in 2011.
## PACC and LABP placement and progress

### North Devon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PACC operational from 19 April 2010</th>
<th>Roundswell, Barnstaple from September 2011</th>
<th>Presently at the Tutorial Unit, St Johns Lane and Yeo Centre, St George’s Road</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>LABP</strong></th>
<th><strong>Schools</strong></th>
<th><strong>Status and notes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Estimated delivery date</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| North    | Ilfracombe CC | Teacher started in post April 2010  
Accommodation in own schools | September 2010 |
|          | Braunton CC | | |

| Barnstaple | Park CC  
Pilton CC | Discussion with present Chances staff have taken place  
Needs and resources analysis underway | September 2010 |

| South Molton and Chumleigh | South Molton CC  
Chumleigh CC | Meetings have taken place about enhancing provision in schools, no new recruitment; reorganisation of current staffing  
Joint collaboration with Youth Service about developing future facilities at CCC  
Needs and resources process begun | September 2010 |

| North West Devon and Torridge | Bideford CC  
Torrington CC  
Holsworthy CC | LABP probably in Bideford, possibly ‘Wings’  
BESD provision at Clearwater  
Working party met for first time  
Need to reconfigure when new head of gifted and talented becomes involved | March 2011 |
### Exeter and East

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LABP</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Estimated delivery date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>St James’</td>
<td>• Schools approached individually</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Luke’s</td>
<td>• Initial meeting with group of heads taken place; heads in agreement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISCA</td>
<td>• Working Party initial meeting has taken place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Peters</td>
<td>• Working party for needs and provision analysis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>West Exe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Southbrook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Axe Valley CC</td>
<td>• Working party underway, joint planning day held in June to look at phase 1 requirements, needs analysis and partnership agreement</td>
<td>December 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honiton CC</td>
<td>• Colyton interested in involvement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colyton</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>East and Mid</td>
<td>Kings School</td>
<td>• Renting in Bicton, sharing with PACC</td>
<td>September 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sidmouth</td>
<td>• Partnership agreement being drawn up</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clyst CC</td>
<td>• Appointed LABP leader and advertising for TA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Needs analysis in June</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Tiverton CC</td>
<td>• Presently running at Barrington Street. Involving Outdoor Learning Team and Link Ed – a satellite PACC? Need to reconfigure more as an LABP making additional services more explicit to the partnership of schools</td>
<td>March 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QE at Crediton</td>
<td>• Need for partnership arrangement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uffculme</td>
<td>• Uffculme applying for Academy status, which has implications for accessing the LABP funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td>Exmouth Local Learning Community (LLC)</td>
<td>• A visit with head and deputies was held in June</td>
<td>July 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interest in through model with LLC and links with Sidmouth,Clyst and Kings LABP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Considering options</td>
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### South and West

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LABP</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Estimated delivery date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ivybridge</td>
<td>Ivybridge CC</td>
<td>• Initial meeting with school completed – considering decision about partnership arrangements and awaiting decision of head</td>
<td>tbc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totnes</td>
<td>KEVICCs</td>
<td>• South Dartmoor realigning with Newton Abbott and Kingsteignton. Kevics preference for a through model with LLC and Bidewell Brook.</td>
<td>tbc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton Abbott</td>
<td>Newton Abbot College</td>
<td>• Base identified and agreed.</td>
<td>September 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingsteignton</td>
<td>Teign School</td>
<td>• Appointed LABP leader, arranged venue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashburton (South Dartmoor)</td>
<td>South Dartmoor CC</td>
<td>• New involvement of South Dartmoor to be discussed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Meeting for needs analysis held in June.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Partnership agreement meeting held in July.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>South East coast</td>
<td>Dawlish CC</td>
<td>• Needs and provision analysis completed.</td>
<td>September 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teignmouth CC</td>
<td>• Appointed LABP leader.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Partnership agreement in progress to clarify issue of sharing number of places.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tavistock</td>
<td>Tavistock LLC</td>
<td>• Meeting with the senior teams of Tavistock and Okehampton to discuss partnership possibilities.</td>
<td>Following up in September 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okehampton</td>
<td>Okehampton LLC</td>
<td>• Through model to be developed.</td>
<td>tbc</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• LLC consulted and agreement for process of needs identification to take place.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Meet with the senior teams of Tavistock and Okehampton to discuss partnership possibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Following up in September 2010.</td>
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Secondary Communication and Interaction Resource Bases (CAIRBs)

Schools organisation
The scheme has gone to public consultation and this is now in progress. The estimated timescale is:
• public notice response time ends 2 July
• it is anticipated that the outcome will be known by 10 November
• the three bases should be ready to open for new students from January 2011.

Appointment of staff
So that the bases are thoroughly prepared for the new intake in January the schools have appointed staff to work with ASD pupils already on roll. Staff have been appointed at Pilton Community College, South Dartmoor Community College and Tiverton High School.

Each base will eventually have 1.5 teachers to do effective outreach and work in the host school. It is anticipated that the remainder of the posts at Pilton (0.7) and South Dartmoor (0.5) will be filled early in the autumn term.

Adverts have been placed for 2.0 teaching assistants for all three bases and it is hoped that they will be appointed by November at the latest. This gives the new teachers the opportunity to be involved closely in the appointment of teaching assistants.

Identifying locations and equipping bases
In each setting a suitable designated area has been identified for the base, following the advice of the County Autism Team. Funding has been provided for refurbishment and equipment suited to the needs of these pupils and will include the facility to support sensory processing needs. This will take place during the summer break.
Training
Early appointment gives new staff the opportunity to receive training from the County Autism Team and other specialist agencies, such as the Occupational Therapy Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) and to develop close co-operation with the existing primary CAIRBS. It is also anticipated that some of these agencies will form part of the operational group.

Training is planned for September and October 2010 and will build on the substantial existing knowledge and experience of all staff. Formal training as well as consultation and planning time will also be provided. This will take the form of a common induction delivered by the County Autism Team to ensure a consistent ethos and practice across all three bases.

Intake January 2011
During the autumn term, CSET will meet with County Autism Team and the school to identify and plan for the additional gradual intake of new pupils for January and beyond.

Management
An operational group is set up to oversee countywide provision. In addition, area groups will meet at least once a term and will include staff from the setting, representatives from the primary CAIRBs, local special schools, the County Autism Team and will have links to integrated children’s services.

There will also be an expectation that staff from all three bases will meet once a term with the County Autism Team to continue to ensure consistency across the settings and to share successful developments and plan the way forward.

Benefits
It is anticipated that the successful development of these bases will result in considerable financial savings for the county in the short and long term.

However, we are more excited about the increased potential for meeting the needs of these young people in mainstream settings much more effectively. This can be achieved not only in the bases, but through the development of targeted outreach in each area. It is clear from the conversations we have had with parents, schools and young people that this opportunity is anticipated with considerable optimism.
4. Special schools

Residential Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) provision
Demolition and building work at Oaklands Park School is proceeding and the project continues to make progress in line with the project plan and in the appropriate timescales.

It is still possible to complete the project by the projected date of October 2010. Operational running options are being discussed with the school.

Day Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) special school North Devon
A site has been identified for delivering the interim provision at Clearwater House in Bideford. Public consultation will be concluded in July 2010 and planning processes are being worked through. Marland School will deliver an interim provision until the new unit at Roundswell has been built. There have also been discussions with Bideford Community College. All parties are clear that this site is not only suitable, but that refurbishment is a good longer term investment in terms of potential LABP use by North West Devon Schools Partnership at a later date.

A lead teacher and further staff have been recruited. The development process in terms of working practice has been taking place. Further staff are being recruited by Marland School to support the interim provision and an initial revenue funding stream has been identified. It is hoped that this interim provision will be ready in the autumn term with five students initially starting in November 2010, going up to 12 students by the following March.

A site has been identified at Roundswell in Barnstaple for the development of a new building with 25. This unit will form part of Marland School and will be run by Marland. The design brief has been completed and a formal agreement has been signed with the contractors. The completion date of this build is September 2011. Before that we need to go through the consultation and planning process, and identify the ongoing revenue funding.

Recommissioning of special schools
Following an initial exploratory phase seven work packages have been identified.

Work package 1 - Data
Identify all the databases currently used for recording information relating to additional needs and cross reference information held with schools data.
- Compile a record of all information held and its location.
- Publish data so that it is accessible to strategic leads.
- Create a data framework to enable future updates.

Work package 2 - Resources
- Identify the budget needed for each special school by doing a full funding review which includes:
  - identifying any necessary realignment of services and subsequent costs
  - the pupil-led funding element
  - the premises element.
- Develop a costed service level agreement for each school.
Work package 3 - A gap analysis of need versus provision
- Analyse data identified in work package 1 to identify the full range of need.
- Identify the full range of provision required across the continuum of need.
- Audit the skills, the specialisms of the schools and include potential enhancement identified through the core offer (work package 4).
- Identify the gaps and how they can be managed.
- Make recommendations for future provision needs across Devon in terms of settings and services and training.

Work package 4 - The core offer from health and social care
- Establish current services available to all special schools.
- Using the data from Work package 1 identify children and young people’s needs.
- Establish the core offer for each special school to be included in the Service Level Agreement.

Work package 5 - The networks
- Establish key purpose of networks.
- Identify operational model including management.

Work package 6 - Specialist foster care
- Audit current provision versus need to identify gaps.
- Commission specific foster care linked to special school placements.

Work package 7 - Early years and Post 16
- Audit current provision.
- Identify gaps.
- Devise model of delivery.

The intention is to have completed the recommissioning process by the end of the year.
5. Cross-sector work streams

**Financial planning**
All work across the whole of Stepping Stones must be based on firm financial planning.

Much of this planning is centred on providing financial models to support hypotheses about more efficient ways of working and using resources to meet needs. In many cases this involves a process of disinvestment followed by reinvestment in more cost effective and efficient ways of working; with each project needing to be able to make a strong business case.

At present the models for many of the projects that will need changes to funding are being completed ready to go to consultation in September 2010 through Schools Finance Group (SFiG), so that any changes can be put into place in April 2011.

Further details will be presented in September 2010 in a paper to SFiG.

**Supporting schools to show inclusive practice**
Work is being done on the schools Special Educational Needs (SEN) Framework to align it closely to the school Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF). Once this is completed there will be further recommendations about encouraging wider use and coverage of this Framework to:
- promote quality inclusive practice
- target resources in a more efficient way
- support schools in the quality assurance and inspection process.

**Integrated Assessment**
The pilot project in Exeter and East Devon is being reviewed to learn lessons and identify the issues related to moving to an integrated assessment model. Issues raised by the pilot will feed into future planning about the development of Integrated Assessment across Devon, and it is likely the pilot project will develop in to a pathfinder initiative which will support changing practice across the whole of Devon.

Issues raised by schools about duplicating assessment processes have been acknowledged and will be addressed by looking at how the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) paper work can be aligned with present SEN paperwork.

**Pupil Attitudes to School and Self (PASS)**
Currently there are 40 schools which have taken up the subsidised funding for PASS, and nearly 60 schools have requested additional information or attended launch sessions (17 secondary schools, 3 special schools, 3 Personalised Alternative Curriculum Centres and 17 primary, infant or junior schools).

The initial offer of funding was made to all secondary and special schools along with seven identified learning communities covering 70 schools - Ilfracombe, Barnstaple, Central and Chestnut, Teignmouth, Dartmouth, Beacon, Bideford and Braunton. Braunton is part of the TaMHS pilot and the rest were selected according to the deprivation indices provided by Devon Primary Care Trust. A number of schools have also independently purchased the standalone version of PASS to evaluate
intervention for vulnerable groups. We have received a full report for one school and four others will be delivered soon. A number of other schools are collecting their data for analysis at the end of the summer term. All reports are sent to the school and copied to Devon County Council in a secure format.

We have commissioned the EPS to offer additional time to schools who use PASS to support their use of the data and identification of vulnerable groups. In addition to this the EPS has been provided with four standalone copies of PASS so that potentially all vulnerable children in Devon have access to it.

The next step for the project is to agree the parameters for the next group of schools to be offered subsidised funding. It is likely that, with our health partners, we will use the deprivation indices to target individual schools in numbers that our project finance will allow. The initial roll out project is due to run until December 2010, when it is likely that some form of follow up work will be agreed for the three year duration of the funding subsidy.

**The future**

This section addresses some of the issues and presents some thoughts in terms of the future from the programme manager’s point of view.

1. What does Stepping Stones offer?

It is important to distinguish between the model of Stepping Stones as a continuum of provision which can be applied to all services for children and young people, and the name Stepping Stones which has been given to the programme which co-ordinates a number of key projects. The model has been useful and should continue to be used.

In terms of the programme it has become clear that Stepping Stones offers:

- additional capacity to the process of strategic alignment
- additional structures to support strategic change
- a clear vehicle for looking at efficiencies and ensuring value for money.
2. The strength of a child-centred approach

Stepping Stones has focused on a child-centred approach to reviewing and developing services. This approach has meant that all agencies and schools can engage and draw on their professional understanding in a coherent way. In the design of the services the question has always been how will this look from the point of view of the child or young person as a whole? It will be important that this continues and does not default to a service-focused approach as efficiencies and cuts are sought.

3. Focusing on identifying and meeting needs

Stepping Stones has opened up significant discussions about the way that resources are allocated. A key methodology in the programme is to support all partners to identify the needs of children and young people they support and then identify the resources that they have to meet those needs. It has been interesting that schools by themselves are used to this way of working, although some gaps in schools capacity to do this have been identified, but that when working in partnership the communities of schools and agencies find this process difficult. The development of this seemingly simple but highly complex process with partnerships of schools and agencies would be a key to further development.

This could involve:
- continued support for schools and agencies in the common identification and assessment of need (the THRIVE programme in North Devon is a good example)
- use of common descriptors and language across Devon when describing need
- opportunities for partnerships and communities to evaluate resources at their disposal. This should include skill levels of staff and access to professionals as well as the financial resources allocated to them.

4. Funding pressures and priorities

It is likely in the future that, as resources become tighter, the focus on efficient targeting and use of resources becomes even more important. This has been the principle behind Stepping Stones from its conception, so the rationales and methodologies behind the programme will apply more than ever. ‘Future proofing’ is at the heart of the development and design of all new structures and delivery mechanisms. Over the next few months, as we enter Phase 4 of the programme, there will need to be a revaluation of the priorities.

We will maintain our commitment to support the most vulnerable and children at risk of not meeting the Every Child Matters outcomes. It would be natural to prioritise resources at the higher of the continuum of need, however it is important to remember that the strength of Stepping Stones is that it considers the whole continuum of need because, to deliver services at the higher end of the continuum, there needs to be efficient focus on the proactive and preventative work at lower levels of need. This is important in terms of meeting all children’s needs and is cost effective in the long term.
5. Strategic leadership, strategic commissioning and the partnership between schools and Devon County Council

From the start Stepping Stones has attempted to introduce a new way of working in terms of the relationship between Devon County Council and schools. New structures, systems and practices have been designed using a process of formative consultation. Strategic leadership has been offered and has drawn together the efforts of all into a coherent way forward. This strategic leadership has been crucial, especially when linked to the strategic commissioning process.

At present the focus has been on Devon County Council providing this leadership. The question now needs to be asked as to whether the balance of this responsibly is well positioned. This is a challenging question as it asks schools to balance autonomy, their own capacity and focusing on their own communities with a more strategic county wide agenda.

6. Local delivery, co-ordination and accountability

One of the key visions of Stepping Stones is to deliver services and support at as local level as possible, and mechanisms for delivering specialist services locally have been built into the new structures. A key issue will be the way that these services are now co-ordinated at the local level and then ensuring consistency and quality across Devon.

For this co-ordination and accountability to take place there will need to be capacity and infrastructures at the local level to co-ordinate and manage these resources in an efficient way that ensures equity and make sure that children and young people’s need are met.

7. Partnership working in a mixed economy – academies and free schools

Partnerships have been a crucial part of Stepping Stones. Partnerships offer the opportunity to:
- promote cost efficiencies
- share and develop effective practice through a shared workforce
- support staff
- joint commission services to meet local needs
- service a wider geographic community
- collaborate in the meeting of low incident needs more effectively
- act as a conduit for the delivery of services.
As a mixed economy of education providers develops, the benefits of this form of working also apply and will benefit those providers and the children and young people that they serve.

For example, we have always said that schools should only get into a partnership if they can see a benefit to their schools and the young people that they serve. Schools have been able to see these benefits and have engaged with the process. We would hope that future structures of schools and academies would be able to see these benefits to those they serve.

8. Interdependencies

Professional networks and integrated working
The focus of Stepping Stones to this point has been on developing structures, such as bases and centres. These will only be partially effective if the next phase of the development of professional networks does not take place. It will be through the professional networks that:

- we will make sure that no children slip through the net of support
- children and young people are supported to move efficiently up and down the continuum of provision
- resources are used efficiently by co-ordinating professional input
- teams around children and young people can work in a co-ordinated way.

It will be through integrated working that the whole child is considered and more efficient (and cost effective) practice will be delivered.

Funding arrangements
Over the past year there have been discussions about the use of resources for SEN and exclusions.

Considerable amounts of money have been devolved to schools to meet additional needs. The premise behind Stepping Stones is to make sure that resources are being used in an efficient way to meet needs. This focus has inevitably focused on the money held by Devon County Council, however, it will be important to develop the mechanism to look at how devolved funding is being used to identify where it is being used well and where improvements are needed.

It will also be important to address some of the contradictory funding arrangements for children and young people who are pushing the inclusion boundaries because of challenging behaviour. There is no doubt that the needs of these children and young people are a constant challenge to schools which devote large amounts of time, effort and resources to trying to meet these needs. However, the differences between the schools in the way they address these higher levels of need are clear. Further proactive mechanisms of support from Devon County Council need to be drawn up to support schools working with these youngsters. Schools that want to use exclusion need to be made aware of the true cost of this to the educational community.
To comment on this document or for more copies contact the Strategic Commissioners on 01392 382047 or email steppingstones-mailbox@devon.gov.uk