

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 18 JUNE 2020

SUBJECT OF REPORT: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES (SEND) - STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: MIKE NEWMAN, STRATEGY & POLICY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

KEY DECISION: N/A

REASON: THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel is recommended to:

- i. Note the successful delivery of a joint Local Area Action Plan which sets out clear goals for service improvement in the coming years
- ii. Consider how the Scrutiny Panel may wish to engage with the ongoing monitoring, review and development of the strategy

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

During May 2018, Ofsted undertook a Local Joint Area Review (LJAR) of SEND services in North Somerset. In common with around 50% of Local Areas who have experienced such reviews to date, a written statement of action (WSA) was required to address areas identified for improvement. North Somerset's WSA was approved by Ofsted and DfE in October 2018.

The LJAR is a multiagency inspection, specifically focusing on the strategic leadership, commissioning and processes of the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group, but also involving health providers, schools, colleges, and other non-statutory partners. An emphasis is placed on the views of parents and carers in particular as represented by the local parent/carers forum (PCF).

While a number of previous reports to the panel have detailed specific areas of our response to the LJAR, a key requirement was the development of a Local Area SEND Strategy. This work was underway at the time of the Ofsted LJAR inspection but was renewed and refreshed after the visit. Working in co-production with partners has ensured that the document reflects the wider experience of the system, sets this in the context of values and principles which all parties will uphold, and which emphasises the primary importance of co-production.

The SEND Action Plan forms a significant part of the strategy, and includes:

- Those areas of longer-term activity required to complete delivery of our Written Statement of Action as agreed by Ofsted and DfE
- Work to support sufficiency and enhancement of capacity, arising from the SEND Programme Board's analysis of the first SEND Management Information report
- Additional actions required to secure and enhance co-production with parents and carers, including supporting the sustainability of a local parent carer forum
- Activity to support ongoing improvement in services

We have attempted to carefully link this activity to evidence of need. Each action in the strategy is therefore linked to either an agreed WSA work area, or to a section of the SEND Management Information (MI) report. This linking will be refined with additional evidence as the strategy is reviewed in the light of the now regular MI reports.

2. POLICY

In devising a strategy for the delivery and improvement of services it is important to note that the Department for Education and Ofsted expect coordination and strategic oversight of services at a 'local area' level, including collaboration between statutory and non-statutory partners to ensure that services are delivered coherently and effectively across the education, health and care landscape. While the Local Authority is the commissioner and in some cases the provider of many of these services, it also holds a primary role in terms of maintaining the strategic oversight and coordination of the local partnership.

The Strategy & Action Plan, along with other partnership activity is monitored by the [SEND Programme Board](#). This is chaired by the Assistant Director – Children's Support & Safeguarding, and includes in its membership the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services, and the Chair of this Scrutiny Panel.

3. DETAILS

The full strategy and action plan, and the co-production charter which supports it are included with this document.

4. CONSULTATION

Given the requirement to improve relationships with parents and carers detailed in the WSA, the strategy was delivered in co-production from the outset:

- The vision, principles and aims were agreed via two externally facilitated workshops, including elected members, senior leaders across the LA and CCG, parents and carers
- Subsequent work to develop the strategy was undertaken by a subgroup of the SEND Programme Board including representatives from all of the above groups
- The Parent/Carer forum were instrumental in the delivery of the final strategy, providing supportive and challenging feedback throughout the development process. The PCF was also influential in the development of the co-production charter
- The final draft strategy was subject to a public consultation process from November 2019 - January 2020.

Following the adoption of the strategy in January 2020, work has commenced to develop a child and young person friendly version, working with our local Special Schools. This has been delayed by the pandemic and associated restrictions but will recommence as soon as this is appropriate.

A formal 'launch' of the strategy will be undertaken at the North Somerset Local Area SEND Conference. A rearranged date for this event will follow and will be communicated to all elected members.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific implications arising from the adoption of this strategy and action plan. However, individual projects within the plan may result in specific financial changes which will be detailed as required.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

SEND services are delivered primarily by Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups via powers arising from the Children & Families Act 2014, further detailed in the SEND Code of Practice which was most recently revised in May 2020.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

None

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Services for children with SEND, their parents and carers support specific vulnerable groups within the community. The strategy and action plan includes actions to ensure equitable, needs-led access to support services across education, health and care.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The majority of the activity included within the action plan requires action by the People & Communities Directorate, or by our partners in schools and NHS bodies. Some cross-directorate and corporate activity may be required to support individual actions such as those requiring capital programme management or impacting on the work of the Integrated Transport Unit.

11. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

AUTHOR

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APPENDICES

- North Somerset Local Area SEND Strategy & Action Plan
- North Somerset Local Area SEND Co-Production Charter

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Children & Families Act, 2014](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice 2015 \[revised May 2020\]](#)
- [North Somerset Local Area Written Statement of Action \[October 2018\]](#)