

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY STRATEGY

To: **Cabinet**

Date: **22nd May 2012**

From: **Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children and Young People's Services and Adult Social Care**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **2012/028** *Key decision:* **Yes**

Purpose: **To inform Cabinet of the developments in the review and updating of the Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy (SEND Strategy) for 2012-16.**

Recommendation: **Cabinet is asked to:**

- a) Endorse the contents of the SEND Strategy for Cambridgeshire and the associated action plan**
- b) Note the implications outlined in Section 6 of this paper.**

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy is being updated in order to reflect the many changes and recommendations that have been made at national level. Most notably, in March 2011 the Government launched a Green Paper entitled “Support and Aspiration: A new approach special educational needs and disability” (SEN Green Paper) which makes wide-ranging proposals to respond to the needs of children and young people with SEND, their families and the professionals who work with them.

1.2 The SEND Strategy for 2012-16 (see Appendix 1) describes to parents/carers and partners (including schools), the ways in which the Local Authority, together with its partners, will develop services and provision so that children who are identified as having SEND will have the best opportunity to achieve their full potential.

1.3 The SEND Strategy is accompanied by a more detailed data set and an action plan. It is important to note that this action plan can only be delivered in partnership with partners and schools, and is expected to be implemented over a 4-year period. Therefore more detailed plans will be developed on an annual basis to ensure the action plan is delivered.

1.4 The term ‘special educational needs’ is defined by the SEN Code of Practice (2001) as:

“Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

- Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or
- Have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority; or
- Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definitions above or would so do if special educational provision was not made for them.

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.”

1.5 The Equality Act (2010) defines disability as when:

“the person has a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”

1.6 The working definition for disability used within Cambridgeshire by Children’s Social Care and Short Break services is:

“The needs of the disabled child or young person are beyond those of a non-disabled child of the same age and means they are likely to require lifelong support in the future from statutory services.”

2. SEND STRATEGY

2.1 The underlying principles of the SEND Strategy are that all children and young people have important rights. These include being safe, feeling valued, enjoying learning and achieving success through participation in education, community and family life. To protect these rights we are committed to the following principles:

- Involving children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers in all decisions about them
- Ensuring the inclusion and participation of children and young people with SEND in all aspects of family, school and community life
- Receiving the right support at the right time.

2.2 The key outcomes that we are aiming to achieve through the SEND Strategy include:

- Improved attainment for pupils with SEND at end of Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4
- Reduced gap between the attainment of pupils with SEND and non-SEND (including those who are in receipt of FSM and/or are Looked After Children)
- Reduction in fixed term and permanent exclusion due to SEND
- Families reporting positive experience of participating in the assessment and planning process for their child with SEND
- A reduction in numbers of children and young people with SEND who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and the numbers of young people in supported living, work or training increasing from the base level of March 2012
- Increase in the number of young people's educational, health and care needs being met within local provision and reduction in 'out of county' placements.

2.3 The Local Authority is, with partners, in a strong position to deliver the key outcomes as identified within the SEND Strategy. The Council will monitor the impact of the SEND Strategy and publish a (publicly available) progress update against this framework every 12 months for the duration of the SEND Strategy. It is proposed that events promoting the new Strategy are held with Local Authority staff, young people, parents, and partners from June 2012.

3. CONSULTATION PROCESS

3.1 The initial draft of the SEND Strategy was subject to a wide-ranging consultation between November 2011 and 31st January 2012, through a range of workshops, briefings and on-line questionnaires. The consultation provided the opportunity for members, staff and our partners, including parents/carers, schools and young people to contribute their experiences and views and help shape the strategy.

3.2 The consultation process was planned by a multi-agency group whose membership included representatives from across Children and Young People's Services, the NHS, voluntary and community sector organisations,

parents and members. Through the three-month consultation over 27 events were held involving over 1,000 participants in total.

- 3.3 In addition to the multi-agency group, a number of members attended and contributed to four area-based events for parents of children with SEND and the SEND Headteachers Conference. Further, member-led task and finish groups were established (as part of the Overview and Scrutiny process) to assist the development of the SEND Strategy.
- 3.4 The consultation enabled a significant amount of qualitative information to be collected from our many partners as well as young people and their parents/carers. This information has been thoroughly analysed and has significantly influenced the final contents and form of the SEND Strategy.

4. DATA

- 4.1 In addition to the consultation process (see above) there has been a rigorous analysis of a number of data sets with some of the key messages detailed below.

Identification

- 4.2 Cambridgeshire has a high proportion of pupils identified as have special educational needs (SEN) in comparison to national data and statistical neighbours. This includes children who are on 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' as well as those with statements. Identification of SEN is also becoming more common in Cambridgeshire; the prevalence between 2006-2011 having risen by 4.5% in Cambridgeshire in comparison to the national trend of 2%. Patterns of identification vary across the county with the highest proportion of pupils with SEN living in Wisbech and Cambridge North and South.

Numbers

- 4.3 In Cambridgeshire there are over 17,000 pupils identified as having SEN; this is 22.3% of the pupils in Cambridgeshire schools (2011 data).

Type of need

- 4.4 Children with identified behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD) make up the largest group within the total cohort of children with SEN. The percentage of Cambridgeshire pupils identified in this category is greater than the national average, and there is a significant increase in numbers of pupils with BESD being identified in the secondary phase. The other areas where Cambridgeshire's identification rates are higher than the national average are pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Specific Learning Difficulties.

Attainment

- 4.5 The academic performance of pupils with SEN is significantly below the performance of pupils without SEN at every Key Stage. Nationally, for example, only 22% of pupils with SEN achieve 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths (2011 data). This compares to 70% of pupils

without SEN achieving 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths (2011 data).

- 4.6 In Cambridgeshire 27% of pupils with SEN achieve 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths (2011 data). This compares with 72% of pupils without SEN achieving 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths (2011 data).
- 4.7 The key issue is the level of progress that children with SEN make at school. In Cambridgeshire in 2011, the gap in performance narrowed between children with SEN and those without, based upon achievement of 5+ GCSE grades A*-C including English and Maths. Cambridgeshire's attainment gap, at this stage, remains smaller than the gap at national level.
- 4.8 Low attainment has long-lasting consequences. Young people without five A*-C GCSEs are more likely to be not in education, employment or training, and children from workless households are more likely to be unemployed themselves as adults. Through the implementation of the SEND Strategy we will be promoting good practice in schools and settings to enable children and young people with SEND to make good progress and be able to evidence achievements across all Key Stages.

Attendance

- 4.9 School attendance is a critical factor that has an impact on other outcome areas for children and young people. School attendance rates (for the whole school population) in Cambridgeshire in 2010/11 stood at 94.7% for primary and 93.1% for secondary schools, which is broadly in line with the national figures (95%, primary and 93.5%, secondary).
- 4.10 Nationally, during 2009/10, pupils with SEN were more likely to be absent from school than other pupils. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and BESD were the most likely to be absent from school. In Cambridgeshire; the number of fixed term exclusions for pupils with SEND declined from 1753 in 2009/10 to 1544 in 2010/11. However students with SEND are still significantly over represented (70% of all excluded pupils).

5. ALIGNMENT WITH PRIORITIES AND WAYS OF WORKING

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- 5.1 **Developing the local economy for the benefit of all:** Educational attainment at 16 and 19 has a demonstrable link to wider economic outcomes. Young people participating in education, employment and training to age 19 are more likely to be healthy, develop good social skills and have a lower offending rate.
- 5.2 **Helping people live healthy and independent lives:** Education, employment and health are all key to giving children and young people with SEND the skills and confidence to live as independently as possible. Through the implementation of the SEND Strategy, the Local Authority will, in conjunction with our partners work to increase the opportunities for young people. This will include out of school activities and mainstream and specialist youth services through to the age of 25 years. We will work to promote opportunities for disabled children and young people and ensure

greater access to these activities. We will also draw upon the wide range of resources available from the voluntary and community sector to support these children and young people and their families.

5.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people: Through the implementation of the SEND Strategy, we will work with our partners to ensure that children and young people with SEND have a full range of support and opportunities available to them. This will enable them to become confident individuals, effective communicators, successful learners and responsible citizens, and achieve the life outcomes to which they and their families aspire. We will promote integrated assessment and practice which will improve information sharing between services and agencies to ensure children and young people with SEND and their families receive a more integrated service.

5.4 Ways of working: The following bullet points set out implications identified by officers:

- **Leadership:** We will look to ensure that the identification and assessment of need is streamlined to reduce repetition and to ensure young people receive the right service (provided either by the Local Authority or a partner organisation) at the right time.
- **Working locally:** Many of the actions contained within the Strategy will require partnership working with other organisations to ensure the best possible service is provided. Through a better integration of our working practices, we will involve parents/carers more in decision making. We will also build on existing parent/carer forums such as the Parent Partnership Service, Pinpoint and other voluntary organisations and routinely consult and seek their views on current and future services.
- **Investing in growth:** We are looking to focus on early identification and intervention, which will ultimately increase the child or young person's independence and choice and helping them to help themselves. This will improve their quality of life and reduce their reliance on public services whilst also reducing cost. See also Section 6.1.2 below.

6. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

6.1 Resource and Performance Implications

6.1.1 Human Resources: There may be some re-focusing of the roles of current staff (within the scope of their current job descriptions) to align with the priorities and actions contained within the Strategy. For example, through the development of specialist SEND Hubs in six Children's Centres, staff will be supported to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to provide increased support to parents/carers of children with SEND.

6.1.2 Integrated Planning Process (IPP): Through the IPP process a number of changes have been made to services supporting children with SEND. For example the Specialist Teaching Team which supports children in primary school has been reduced by a third. These reductions have been achieved

over a two-year period without making any compulsory redundancies. Children and Young People's Services is required to make a further £10 million of savings over the next two years which could further impact on delivery.

- 6.1.3 Invest to Transform funding (identified through the IPP) is being used to develop additional provision for children with autism within the County, to reduce the number of children and young people placed with out of county providers. Additional transformation funding is also being used to pilot a number of evidence based projects within schools. This includes implementing the Achievement for All programme (a tailored school improvement framework, that aims to raise the aspirations, access and achievement of pupils identified with SEND) across more than 50 primary and secondary schools. We will also be piloting restorative approaches in a number of schools with the aim of achieving significant improvements in staff and student wellbeing and a reduction in exclusions.
- 6.1.4 *Funding Changes:* On 26th March 2012 the Department for Education (DfE) set out a paper for consultation proposing far reaching changes to the way that schools and Local Authorities are funded. Both the proposals and the timescale outlined within the paper are ambitious. In responding, the Local Authority will seek to ensure that there is sufficient funding and services to enable children with SEND to achieve and succeed. This new funding formula is likely to impact upon budgets and may result in a movement of funds from the Local Authority to schools which will reduce staff numbers available to implement this Strategy, but further details are awaited following the consultation.
- 6.1.5 *Partnership working:* There needs to be an increase in partnership and voluntary sector working to support the vision and principles contained in both the SEND Strategy and SEN Green Paper. Without effective partnership working, at both strategic and operational levels, we will not be able to fully implement the actions in the SEND Strategy.
- 6.1.6 *Adult Services:* The focus of the SEND Strategy is supporting children and young people with SEND through to adulthood, and as such there will continue to be close working with Adult Services. Work is underway to explore different approaches to transition that would benefit young people.
- 6.1.7 *Academies:* Academies, like all schools, are expected to provide a high quality education for all children, including those with SEND. It is clear that the Local Authority continues to have a role in relation to 'champion for vulnerable children' in respect of Academies and this includes children with SEND. There is an increased expectation that parents/carers will take a more active role in holding Academies to account and the Local Authority continues to have a responsibility for monitoring Statements of SEN. Academies (currently) have no legal duty to share any pupil level data, School Census returns or end of key stage assessment data with the Local Authority. To mitigate this we have promoted a formal data sharing agreements with Academies and the majority have agreed to adopt this. The funding changes highlighted within Section 6.1.3 will also be applicable to Academies.

6.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

6.2.1 The Department of Education was expected to release the response to feedback on the SEN Green Paper in February / March 2012. In lieu of this response, there is uncertainty whether there will be any changes to the proposals or details of the timeframe to undertake the necessary changes to the current legislation (e.g. if changes are to be made to the Statement of SEN process). It is possible that Cambridgeshire may be required to adopt some of the more radical proposals contained with the SEN Green Paper such as parent held budgets. However, it is unlikely that the required legislative changes will be made before 2014-15, and this approach is being developed by some 'early adopter' Local Authorities, so there will be some learning to be shared prior to implementation.

6.2.2 Ofsted, through its new framework, is putting a greater focus on:

- The effectiveness of Local Authority and partners' services for children at risk of harm
- How schools are narrowing the gaps in attainment and progress between different groups of pupils and all pupils nationally. The judgement on achievement will be based on an evaluation of the pupils' learning and progress relative to their starting points at particular ages
- Ensuring the views of parents / children are considered.

The impact of this is that schools are looking to the Local Authority to provide additional support / guidance to meet these new requirements. As such we will be supporting schools and settings to monitor the progress of children and young people with SEND, so that they make the best progress possible. We will also promote the identification of aspirational targets for children and young people with SEND based on national data guidance.

6.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

6.3.1 The proposals / actions contained within the SEND Strategy are unlikely to have any negative impact in this area, and will in fact promote inclusion. A Community Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the SEND Strategy development process and will continue to be updated.

6.4 Engagement and Consultation

6.4.1 Section 2 (above) provides details on the consultation process which has been undertaken.

Source Documents	Location
Cambridgeshire's Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy 2012-16	Room B109 Castle Court Cambridge
Community Impact Assessment	
Consultation Summary Document	