



**CABINET – 10<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2018**

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES STRATEGY**  
**2017 TO 2020**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**PART A**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of an engagement exercise undertaken by the Children and Family Services Department with a view to developing a joint approach with key partners (i.e. Clinical Commissioning Groups, Leicestershire Partnership Trust, schools and colleges) to planning, commissioning and delivering special educational needs and disability services, and to seek approval for the implementation of a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy for 2017 to 2020.
2. The Strategy sets out the vision, aspirations and priorities of the Council and its partners for developing support and provisions for children and young people with SEND and their families.

**Recommendations**

3. It is recommended that:
  - (a) The outcome of the engagement exercise be noted;
  - (b) The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2017 – 2020 attached as Appendix A to this report, be approved;
  - (c) That the Director of Children and Family Services, following consultation with the Lead Member, be authorised to make minor amendments to the SEND Strategy 2017 - 2020 as he considers necessary to ensure this remains current and conforms to legislation and good practice.

**Reasons for Recommendations**

4. To approve the SEND Strategy which will provide the basis for planning, commissioning and delivering SEND Services and support by the Council and its partners for children and young people living in Leicestershire over the next three years.

5. To ensure the Council continues to meet its statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, and any future legislation or good practice that comes in to force.

### **Timetable for Decisions (including scrutiny)**

6. In January 2018, the draft SEND Strategy was presented to the Children and Families Partnership Board and the West Leicestershire and the East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) for comment. All Boards supported the proposed Strategy.
7. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Strategy at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and supported the proposed approach.
8. Subject to approval by the Cabinet, the Strategy will be implemented with immediate effect.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

9. In September 2014 the Children and Families Act 2014 came into force. Part 3 of the Act is entitled 'Children and Young People in England with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)'. The Act introduces a number of new duties which local authorities and CCGs are required to meet. The SEND Strategy outlines these responsibilities and sets out how the Council and its CCG partners will work together to meet these.

### **Resource Implications**

10. There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.
11. The Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Corporate Resources have been consulted on this report.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

12. A copy of the report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council via the Members' News in Brief.

### **Officers to Contact**

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## **PART B**

### **Background**

13. In 2014 the Children and Families Act introduced a number of new duties for Local Authorities and CCGs in relation to children and young people under the age of 25 with special educational needs and disabilities. The duties include:
- The identification of and responsibility for children and young people with SEND living in the area;
  - Greater joint working across agencies (i.e. schools and colleges and health and social care bodies) including the promotion of integration and joint commissioning arrangements;
  - A presumption for a child or young person with SEND to be educated in a mainstream setting;
  - Education, Health and Care assessments and plans which replaced the statements of special educational need and extended this to cover children and young people from birth to age 25 (previously 0 – 16 years);
  - Mediation to resolve any matters with parents and young people regarding decisions about an assessment or plan;
  - Increased responsibilities for nursery schools, schools, governing bodies and others;
  - To have regard to the new SEND Code of Practice.
14. Since the introduction of the Act the Council and its partners have been undertaking work to implement its requirements. The SEND Strategy sets out the work already undertaken and the actions required to further support children and young people with SEND living in Leicestershire.

### **The Strategy**

15. The proposed SEND Strategy (attached as Appendix A to this report) sets out how the Council and its partners (i.e. Clinical Commissioning groups, Leicestershire Partnership Trust, schools and colleges) across Leicestershire plan to support children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 years, to achieve their best possible outcomes in line with government reforms. It will provide the overarching framework for future service developments aimed at supporting children and young people with SEND, as well as their families.
16. Implementation of the SEND Strategy will be monitored by the SEND Strategic Board, comprising of representatives from the Council's Children and Family Services, Adults and Communities and Public Health Departments, the West and East Leicestershire and Rutland CCGs, the Leicestershire Partnership Trust, special, primary and secondary schools, further education bodies and the Parent and Carer Forum.
17. The Strategy is underpinned by a detailed work plan that outlines the work streams that will deliver its priorities and which are accountable to the SEND Strategic Board. There will be regular reviews of progress against the detailed work plan which will be reported to the Board, and each workstream will include the outcomes to be met and progress towards meeting these and other performance measures.

18. Progress in implementing the Strategy will be communicated to partners via their representatives on the Board alongside twice yearly newsletters/bulletins and an annual SEND Strategic multi-agency event. Feedback from parents and young people will be sought on an ongoing basis, but formally once a year.
19. The Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis to ensure this remains current and conforms with legislation and good practice. The first review will be due in April 2019. Any major changes will be reported to the Cabinet as appropriate.

### **Priorities**

20. Using information gathered from the engagement exercise and during the development of the draft Strategy, four key priority areas have been identified for the period 2017 to 2020 as set out below:-
  - Improve multi-agency working and coordination of services for children with SEND
  - Improve support for and involvement of parents and carers, children, young people and their families, and ensure they are adequately safeguarded in all settings
  - Improve the quality and sufficiency of SEND education provision and services by:
    - Supporting mainstream schools and other education settings to develop their SEND provision; and
    - Developing local specialist services to ensure sufficiency of places in high quality specialist provision across a continuum
  - Improve the transition to adulthood

### **Outcome of Engagement**

21. Feedback from children and young people with SEND and their families, and front line practitioners working closely with them, has been sought in a number of ways to inform the development of the Strategy and the identification of the four key priority areas detailed above.
22. In autumn 2016, a consultation took place with parents of disabled young people in the 14 to 25 age range. Furthermore in spring 2017, SEND *Pop Up* Voice events were held and the views of parents and children and young people were sought, and during winter 2016 and spring 2017, the Leicestershire Parents' Forum was re-established and a SEND Family Participation post recruited to. The Participation post holder subsequently sought feedback from over 100 parents and 100 young people with SEND in various settings during the summer of 2017.
23. In addition, an on line survey was undertaken during October 2017 which sought parents and young people's views about the services and support they currently received and what they felt worked well, what it was about those services that made them successful, what did not work so well, and the type of services and support they would like to see developed in the future.
24. During the autumn term of 2017 consultation also took place with front line practitioners across Education, Health, Social Care, Early Help and the Voluntary

and Community sectors through workshops and questionnaires. They were asked, in respect of SEND, what worked well in Leicestershire and why, what did not work so well and what could be done to improve this.

25. The Voices that Matter section of the Strategy, found at pages 90 – 93 of Appendix A, summaries key messages which arose during the engagement exercise, detailing services that work well and where children, young people and their families felt less positive, experiences of SEND services and processes, how the landscape of services can sometimes be very confusing, and the accessibility of information and availability of provision locally.
26. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the matter at its meeting on 5 March where it welcomed the Strategy and its principle to promote inclusion across all services and sectors and the inclusion of an honest appraisal of both strengths and weaknesses, as well as setting out actions to address those areas which were not working well.

### **Conclusion**

27. The introduction of SEND reforms by the Government as outlined in the Children and Families Act 2014 provided an ideal opportunity for the Council and its CCG partners to look at how the services provided to children and young people with such needs could be improved and how partners could work together to better achieve this.
28. The introduction of a new Strategy that will apply to all partner agencies in Leicestershire which have a responsibility for commissioning and providing services to children and young people with SEND will provide the basis for future service developments and central oversight of work undertaken by the SEND Strategic Board which will help drive delivery.

### **Background papers**

Report to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny March 5<sup>th</sup> 2018.  
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MId=5322&Ver=4>

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A - SEND Strategy 2017 – 2020
- Appendix B - EHRIA screening

### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

29. There are no equality or human rights implications directly arising from this report. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment screening (attached as Appendix B to this report) has been completed but this concluded that a full impact assessment was not required.

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