

**Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**

**Report of Corporate Director of People  
to  
People Scrutiny Committee**

**28<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

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& Inclusion

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**Annual Report on the Implementation of Southend on Sea's Strategy for Children Age  
0 – 25 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities: "Early Help, Partnership  
Choice and Ambition 2013 – 2016"**

People Scrutiny Committee– Executive Councillor: Councillor Courtenay

**A Part 1 Public Agenda item**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To report on progress of the implementation plan for the strategy for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. The report gives a summary progress report on the 5 key proposals and the action plans that take the strategy forward (**Appendix 2**). The accompanying SEN profile report sets out the progress within the agreed performance framework (**Appendix 3**).

**2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the annual report is noted.  
2.2 Comments are sought on the progress of the Strategy.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Southend on Sea's strategy for Special Educational Needs was approved by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2013 following a period of extensive consultation with a range of partners and stakeholders. There is strong support for the strategy that sets out both local and national developments and priorities.
- 3.2 The strategy is ambitious for all children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It sets out how all schools, services, parents and partners can work together to improve outcomes for young people. The strategy, entitled "Early Help, Partnership, Choice and Ambition" is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 The strategy and action plans are monitored by the SEN Strategy and Review Group. A performance framework was agreed and is set out in Section 5 of the strategy. This is the first of what will be an annual report on the progress of implementation.

#### **4. Progress Report**

4.1 The strategy was approved by Cabinet in June and whilst some actions have already been completed most actions are work that is in progress. The strategy has 5 key proposals under which the actions sit. ( see Appendix 2) The following is a summary and highlights of some of the progress that has been made so far on implementing the strategy.

#### **4.2 Proposal 1 – Early Intervention and a single assessment framework.**

The focus of work over the coming year is on preparing for the introduction of Education Health and Care Plans that will replace the Statement of Special Educational Needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments from September 2014. Alongside this the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for 0-25 yrs is expected to be finalised by government this year. A multi agency Project Board has been established to oversee developments. As this is a major change programme it involves a wide range of partners, schools and organisations as well as parents and carers. There are 6 work streams and groups working on new ways of working taking a person centred approach to planning, on developing personal budgets and the local offer as well as ICT and information governance and preparing for adulthood. Two workshops with parents have been held to inform the development of the Local Offer and these were well attended. Staff from services have attended pathfinder workshops and there have been awareness raising sessions on the Early Support work. Work with SENCOs from schools and Early years settings will begin in the Spring.

#### **4.3 Proposal 2 – Working in Partnership with Parents**

A key piece of work that has been moving forward is the development of the Local Offer. This is to set out in one place information about provision that is available for children and young people in the area who have Special Educational Needs. This is not just a directory of services but the process of developing the offer has to involve parents and children and young people in the development and it should also serve to improve services. Southend's work on this is well underway and 2 workshops with parents have been held to shape and plan the offer. The intention is to develop the offer as an integral part of Southend Information Point (SHIP) which is an online information service for adults, and now children's, services. Work is also underway with schools to develop their offer as well as consultation with youth councils to inform the developments. Developing personal budgets as part of the local offer is another high priority area for 2014 to ensure that parents will have options about a personal budget as part of the Education Health and Care Planning process.

#### **4.4 Proposal 3 - Access to high quality provision**

There has been some significant progress in actions under this proposal. Seabrook College has been established as a federation of the former Priory School and the Renown Centre for Learning together with other services to support children with Behaviour Emotional and Social Difficulties. Recent OFSTED and HMI visits indicate that good progress is being made and that outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children and young people are improving. Alongside this development the nurture provision in all primary schools has moved forward with the establishment of a new training programme.

More schools are developing a nurture base within school and others are developing nurture approaches. Work is also underway with the Special Schools to develop a training offer for mainstream schools and a training needs analysis has been completed that will inform future planning for training.

#### **4.5 Proposal 4 - Raise attainment and expectations for learners with SEN and/or Disabilities**

Analysis of attainment of SEN learners indicates that Southend children are doing less well than children with SEN nationally and that progress to close the gap is too slow. Southend Challenge has been launched as part of work to raise standards and close attainment gaps in all of the Borough's schools. Its focus is to reduce inequalities in the attainment of vulnerable children particularly those on Free School Meals. Alongside this training and support for schools to provide high quality SEN provision will be developed. Raising the profile of SEN with leaders in schools saw the first annual conference on SEN launched in May 2013. This well attended conference was an opportunity to celebrate achievement and to discuss opportunities for making a difference. The second annual conference is planned for March 2014 with the theme of "Behaviour for Learning".

#### **4.6 Proposal 5 - Using resources effectively**

There is an expectation that all schools will audit and evaluate their provision and resources for children with SEN on an annual basis. An audit tool has been developed to support schools to do this and is currently being trialled. The new funding arrangements for mainstream and special schools were implemented in April 2013 and further reviewed with a report to the Schools Forum in January 2014. This report indicates some conservative growth of places in special schools for 2014/15 mainly to reflect the general increase in pupil numbers but also in post 16 provision. The Borough's performance in relation to compliance with the requirements of the statutory assessment process is good.

### **5. Corporate Implications**

#### **5.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities**

The strategy contributes to the Success For All priorities of raising achievement and securing good outcomes for the Borough's children and young people.

#### **5.2 Financial Implications**

From 2013 new financial arrangements were introduced for the funding of SEN in Schools and for Special Schools and Units. These arrangements are kept under review and reports are received by Southend on Sea's Schools Forum as required.

#### **5.3 Legal Implications**

The new Education Health and Care Plans and the new SEN Code of Practice will come into force from September 2014. These will be implemented as per government guidance.

#### **5.4 People Implications**

Staff in schools and services are being trained in order to meet the new requirements of the changes to the Education Health and Care Plans.

## 5.5 **Property Implications**

There are some requirements for suitable accommodation to be provided to ensure the successful implementation of Seabrook College, the Local Authority's new provision for children with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Needs. A plan is in place that is linked to the corporate work stream on the use of building.

## 5.6 **Consultation**

There was an extensive consultation with a wide range of partners in 2013 on the strategy and the proposals within it. There was wide support.

## 5.7 **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

Data is regularly monitored to ensure that there is a match between demand and the provision that reflects the demography of the population. Processes are in place to ensure that there is a fair distribution of resources across schools to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and that resources are targeted to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

## 5.8 **Risk Assessment**

There are a number of potential risks associated with the implementation of any strategy. One is a potential lack of engagement with stakeholders. This has been mitigated through regular meetings with headteachers, Special Educational needs Coordinators and staff in services. An annual SEN conference keeps the profile high with headteachers. Another key risk is associated with introduction of the new systems and processes for the implementation of the new Education Health and Care Plans – this is a major change project. The risk has been mitigated with the establishment of a multi agency project board and underpinning work streams. Also through regular consultation with stakeholders and partners and training for the workforce in schools, early years settings and services.

## 5.9 **Value for Money**

Monitoring the use of SEN resources is incorporated into the strategy. The change to the new systems and processes for the EHC plans will be implemented within existing resources.

## 5.10 **Community Safety Implications**

None

## 5.11 **Environmental Impact**

None

## 6. **Background Papers**

DFE Indicative Draft (0-25) Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

## 7. **Appendices**

**Appendix 1.** “Early Help, Partnership, Choice and Ambition” Southend on Sea’s Strategy for Children age 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities.

**Appendix 2.** Annual Progress Report on the SEN Strategy and Action Plan 2014.

**Appendix 3.** Special Educational Needs Profile 2013