

# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda  
Item No.

Report of Executive Director (Children and Public Health)

to

People Scrutiny Committee

on

6th July 2021

Report prepared by: Brin Martin, Director of Education and  
Early Years

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Outcome letter following the SEND Area Revisit 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**People Scrutiny Committee**  
**Cabinet Member: Councillor L Burton**  
**Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)**

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## 1. Purpose of Report

To share the outcomes of the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) Written Statement of Action (WSOA) revisit undertaken by OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) and the CQC (Care Quality Commission).

Following the publication of the SEND OFSTED/CQC revisit letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, it is an opportunity for members of the People Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the progress made by SEND area partners since the original SEND Local Area inspection in October 2018.

## 2. Recommendations

- a. For members of the People Scrutiny Committee to consider and note the findings within the SEND revisit letter. (Attached as Appendix 1)

## 3. Background

- a. All Local Authority Areas are subject to a local Area SEND Inspection. The inspection is a joint inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the CQC.
- b. As part of the national framework of independent regulator inspection, the Southend Local Area was subject to an inspection of the area's provision for SEND in October 2018.
- c. The SEND Area inspection considers the SEND offer provided by Education Health and Care teams within the Council; Health teams within the Southend Clinical Commissioning Group; and other local SEND providers including schools and settings.
- d. The outcome of the SEND Area inspection in October 2018, undertaken by Ofsted and the CQC, was that the Local Area was required to produce

a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to address four areas of significant weakness. Specifically, to address:

- Joint Commissioning
- The Local Offer
- The quality of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's)
- The monitoring of the quality of provision in settings

- e. OFSTED approved the WSOA for Southend in May 2019.
- f. If an area is required to produce a WSOA, OFSTED and CQC will at some point undertake a revisit to review progress against the WSOA. The revisit of the Southend SEND WSOA took place in May 2021, with inspectors on site 5 - 7 May 2021.
- g. Following off site desktop scrutiny and a survey undertaken by inspectors of parents, the onsite inspection was a blend of face to face and virtual meetings with pupils, parents, the Parent Carers Forum (PCF), school and setting leaders and stakeholders involved in the delivery of the SEND provision in Southend.
- h. Inspectors reviewed all the information they collected from the meetings they held, their review of the documents they requested, and the 366 parent / carers responses to the Ofsted / CQC survey that they undertake for all SEND inspection and revisits.
- i. The full findings from the Ofsted / CQC SEND WSOA revisit is captured in Appendix 1. In summary, inspectors across OFSTED and the CQC found that the area had made sufficient progress in three out of the four areas in the WSOA, and that in the fourth (joint commissioning), whilst they noted some more recent progress, they felt that this had yet to impact fully on children and families and so concluded that sufficient progress had not yet been made.
- j. The WSOA revisit and the subsequent report from Ofsted is a fully independent report. The report has looked at the key issues, including areas of concerns raised by parents and carers since the original Local Area SEND inspection in October 2018. Parents and carers were involved in some of the meetings with the inspection team between 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> May, and 366 parents/carers shared their views on the current SEND offer directly with the inspection team through Ofsted's survey, which the Inspection team no doubt considered when reaching their conclusions captured in their report published in June 2021.
- k. As a result of their revisit, OFSTED/CQC concluded that they will play no further part in monitoring the SEND provision in Southend, unless directed by the Secretary of State, and have asked the Department for Education (DfE) to meet with the Local Area regarding the one WSOA area where sufficient progress has not yet been made (joint commissioning).

- I. The Ofsted report demonstrates good progress since the WSOA was issued, with sufficient progress in three out of the four areas identified in the WSOA, and one area where sufficient progress has not yet been made (joint commissioning). The multi-agency SEND Strategic Partnership Board will ensure that the remaining progress in that area is rapidly addressed.

#### **4. Other Options**

- a. It is a requirement that OFSTED/CQC revisit each area that has a WSOA as part of its regulatory independent function and therefore there were no other options in relation to the WSOA other than the revisit that was undertaken.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendations**

- a. For scrutiny to consider the contents of the independent report (Appendix 1) and the impact of actions taken since the last SEND Area inspection in October 2018.

#### **6. Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map  
SEND provision in all settings forms part of the Safe and Well and Opportunity and Prosperity themes.
- 6.2 Financial Implications  
Not applicable
- 6.3 Legal Implications  
It is a regulatory requirement that each area with a WSOA has a revisit to determine the progress against the discharge of statutory functions.
- 6.4 People Implications  
Not applicable
- 6.5 Property Implications  
Not applicable
- 6.6 Consultation  
Not applicable
- 6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications  
Not applicable
- 6.8 Risk Assessment  
Not applicable
- 6.9 Value for Money  
Not applicable

6.10 Community Safety Implications  
Not applicable

6.11 Environmental Impact  
Not applicable

7. **Background Papers**  
None

8. **Appendices**  
Appendix 1 - OFSTED/CQC SEND revisit letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021.