

# Southend-on-Sea City Council

Executive Director (Children and Public Health)

To

Cabinet

On

8<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Report prepared by: Gary Bloom  
Head of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Agenda  
Item No.

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## Southend SEND Strategy 2022-2025

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

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### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) offer across Southend is delivered by and involves a range of partners, but the offer is led by the Local Authority and Health and is subject to inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Following the LGA Peer review of the Council's SEND and Children with Disability (CWD) services it was agreed that a new SEND strategy for the Southend area was needed, and work was undertaken to revise, review and co-produce a new Southend SEND strategy.
- 1.2 The attached new strategy has been considered at the Southend SEND Strategic Partnership Board and the Education Board in November. This report is seeking Cabinet approval to publish the Southend SEND Strategy 2022-25 in a range of accessible media including print, electronic and video.

### 2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 **Agree the content and format of the Southend SEND Strategy 2022-25; and**
- 2.2 **Agree that the strategy is produced in an accessible document, which can be shared in a variety of formats in order to engage a range of audiences.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The previous SEND Strategy "Success for All" covered the period 2016-19 which spanned the Joint Area SEND Inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in October 2018. As a result of the Inspection the Council and the then named Clinical Commissioning Group (now Integrated Care System) were required to prepare a joint Written Statement of Action determining how the SEND Partnership were going to address and measure the impact of

four areas of weakness. This Written Statement of Action outlined the Three Year Journey for SEND that would lead to an improvement journey and resolve those four areas of weakness.

- 3.2 The revisit by Ofsted and CQC in May 2021 recognised sufficient improvement in three of the four areas of weakness. One of the actions undertaken to improve previous weaknesses was to strengthen the governance arrangements around SEND and to develop a new partnership strategy.
- 3.3 Developing a new SEND Strategy began at a SEND Summit in April 2021 but work on it was delayed following agreement at a Special Council meeting for an independent LGA peer review of the Council's SEND and CWD service which took place in October 2021 and reported its findings and recommendation to Cabinet in January 2022.
- 3.4 The LGA peer review included a recommendation on the new SEND strategy to ensure that it was co-produced and had children and their families at the centre of the strategy.
- 3.5 As a result of that recommendation the Southend SEND Strategic Partnership has ensured that coproduction is at the heart of the Strategy involving children and young people with SEND and their families at every stage. This has included checking back frequently to ensure agreement with the way the Strategy was developing. The five identified priorities in the strategy are what children and young people with SEND and their families told us was important to them and this helped determine what our core commitments are.

Transitions	Children and young people are prepared and supported to thrive at each change in their lives, helping them to feel secure and confident
Early Intervention	Identification, assessment and effective support are provided at the earliest opportunity.
Plans	EHCPs and other plans for children and their families have the young person at the centre, are well co-ordinated, co-produced, timely, and lead to well informed and effective support, which is regularly monitored and reviewed
The Local Offer	Southend's Local Offer website is a widely and easily accessible resource that signposts to a range of universal, targeted and specialist support services and high quality provisions for Children and Young People with SEND and their families.
Good Mental Health and wellbeing	Children and young people are provided with the best chance to achieve positive mental health, be happy and thrive within their family, education and social lives, develop their potential, build strong relationships and contribute to their community.

- 3.6 The new Strategy identifies the key actions required to deliver these priorities and these will be expanded upon with a more detailed success measures document in an accompanying action plan.

- 3.7 Children and young people with SEND and their families told us they wanted to access the Strategy in a variety of ways and once the content is approved work will be undertaken to make this possible.

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

- 4.1 The SEND Partnership could continue to operate without a formal published Strategy or subsume the SEND Strategy into a wider Council Strategy.

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

- 5.1 It is recommended and widely acknowledged that SEND is a joint area responsibility encompassing partners from Education, Health and Care and the children, young people and families they support and therefore a specific coproduced SEND Strategy outlining priorities for the next 3 years is recommended.

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

- 6.1 The SEND Partnership Strategy makes a significant contribution to the Southend 2050 Road Map.
- 6.2 The intention is to deliver the Strategy from within existing revenue and capital resources, however work undertaken as part of the SEND Strategy may highlight the need for e.g. provision development or service redesign.
- 6.3 Any areas of additional expenditure that are identified which cannot be funded from existing available resources will be sought through identified governance routes.
- 6.4 No identified Legal Implications.
- 6.5 No identified People Implications.
- 6.5 No identified Property Implications although SEND Provision Development opportunities may be sought.
- 6.6 The draft SEND Strategy has been co-produce and there has been on going already public consultation with various groups, stakeholder and partner agencies and the attached new Strategy and has been updated in line with the response to that engagement.
- 6.7 No identified Equalities and Diversity Implications.
- 6.8 Risk Assessment – The SEND Risk Log is reviewed regularly as part of the SEND governance process, oversight resting with the SEND Strategic Partnership Board.
- 6.9 Financial Implications for the cost of publishing the strategy will be managed within existing resources. As the strategy develops into action plans, any further

resource implications in relation to the direct education provision for SEND children and young adults with Education Health and Care Plans will fall to the decision of the Education Board. By way of a reminder, the Education Board / Schools' Forum is a statutory body under delegated direction of the Council who in turn oversee the governance, consultation and oversight of the Dedicated Schools Grant and the High Needs block funding within. The Education Board, which is also a published forum have also already agreed resource prioritisation subject to action plans for the expansion of key areas in relation to the direct education provision for SEND within funding available, and therefore the SEND Strategy will be managed within that framework. Any revised considerations that may fall to the SEND team, which are a statutory Council funded service will have to be continually managed within existing resources given the unfortunate strain and recognised cost pressures on Council resources.

6.10 No identified Community Safety Implications.

6.11 No identified Environmental Impact.

## **7. Appendices**

7.1 SEND Strategy (attached).

## **8. Background Papers**

8.1 None.