

Report to Children's Social Care & Learning Select Committee

Title: SEND Review – Outcome and proposal for consultation on
draft vision and draft improvement priorities

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Local members affected: All Electoral Divisions

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Is the report confidential? No

Summary

The current SEND and Inclusion Strategy spans the period 2013 – 2016. A new framework of priorities was required. These needed to consider the recurrent overspends against SEND budgets as well as the impact of recent SEN Reforms.

A Review was commissioned to undertake a strategic analysis of the current position. It considered, in particular, the link between the SEND statutory process of assessment and preparing Education, Health and Care Plans, and the budget outcomes. The review considered stakeholder views and perceptions, including those of children and young people, their parents and carers, school and education setting leaders and SENCOs, specialist professionals from health, education and social care services and officers of the Council. The Chair of the Parent Carer Forum has been directly involved and sits on the SEND Board, to which ongoing reports of the progress of the Review have been sent.

During the course of the Review (from January to July), interim feedback discussions and presentations were arranged in April, May and June, to ensure that stakeholders remained



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linked in to the progress and findings of the review and could assist in the interpretation of early findings.

A framework of Improvement Priorities has resulted. These have been discussed and developed with stakeholders through Interim Feedback sessions, and, subject to further consultation, will form the cornerstones for the new SEND Strategy.

There is an urgency about financial matters. A history of recurrent overspends against SEN budgets, and evidence of continuing similar trends, means that it is important that all stakeholders understand the context and their role and contribution to working together to achieve a strategic approach and direction that is affordable, and will not compromise provision for those children and young people with the most significant special educational needs and disabilities.

The direction of the future SEND Strategy, and the proposal of a draft Vision and the development of 8 draft Improvement Priorities, are compatible with the outcomes and priority areas of the Council's Children and Young People's Plan (2014-2018).

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Select Committee:-

- Considers the findings of the SEND Review as detailed in the attached consultation document
- Subject to views from the Select Committee, confirms the Improvement Priorities and the draft Vision for SEND, as a basis for consulting with stakeholders. (Appendix 1)
- Receives a final report from the Review, to include the draft SEND Strategy with a view to finalising the Strategy by December 2016.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

The Improvement Priorities arise from the recent SEND Review. They will secure changes in practice and emphasis that take account of stakeholder views, whilst moving towards a financially viable approach.

The SEND and Inclusion Strategy will provide the framework to link the management of the High Needs Block and other SEND Budgets, with the statutory SEND framework as set out in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2015, and the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years (January 2015). It will provide a clear framework of priorities and outcomes, within a structure of performance targets. It will assist the effective use of resources, and enable greater coherence across Buckinghamshire in both expectations and professional practice.

The strategic analysis that has been a focal feature of the review, will contribute to the evaluation of the Council's contribution to the Local Area's approach to identifying, assessing and providing for children and young people with SEND.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

The extent of the financial risks means that a new approach and strategy are essential.

The 8 Improvement Priorities may develop or change following further consultation. The Children and Families Act (2014) requires that Local Authorities must consult with children and young people, and their parents in reviewing SEND provision. A Consultation on the draft Vision, and the framework of Improvement Priorities will give a further opportunity for parents and young people to express their views and will assist in the drafting of the future strategy.

C. Resource implications

The resource implications are significant. If new approaches are not put in place, and if recurrent overspends against the High Needs budget continue, the shortfall will have to be met from other education or Council budgets. Current DFE consideration of Education and Schools Funding, may lead to a position where the Schools Block can no longer subsidise the High Needs Budget in respect of overspends. This would mean that the Council would need to ensure that individual children's resource entitlements were met, and this may lead to the need for the Council to fund these expenses from outside the Schools, High Needs or Early Years budgets.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

It is expected that robust and rigorous implementation of new approaches and emphases, will achieve better value for money.

E. Legal implications

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act sets out the Local Authority's responsibilities in relation to SEND. Section 27 sets out the duty of the Local Authority to keep education and care provision under review, and in doing so to consult with children and young people and their families.

F. Property implications

N/A

G. Other implications/issues

An Impact Equality Assessment is not needed at this stage. Following consultation on the Improvement Priorities and draft Vision, the SEND Strategy will be drafted. At that stage it will be necessary to carry out the Equality Impact Assessment.

The SEND Review was unable to fully encompass matters relating to young adults with SEND between 16 and 25. The review will propose this as a future action.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

There has been extensive consultation during the Review, and annex A to this report sets out the various structured discussions between stakeholders and the review consultant.

I. Communication issues

The consultation document and web-based text will refer to the consideration of the Final Report of the SEND Review by the Lead Member, and will seek comments on the proposed Vision and Improvement Priorities.

The web-based email link SENDReview@buckscc.gov.uk will continue to operate.

Schools, Colleges and Early Years settings will be specifically notified of the consultation, as will parent representatives.

J. Progress Monitoring

The consultation progress will be monitored by the Head of Service (SEND) reporting to the Director of Learning. It is expected that a report on review feedback and a draft SEND Strategy will be brought by the Lead Member to Select Committee on 8 November.

K. Review

N/A

Background Papers/Links

- Bucks Local Offer – SEND Review page
<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/advice.page?id=ginScCY9QWo>
- Children and Families Act, 2014, Part 3, s27
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/part/3/crossheading/review-of-education-and-care-provision/enacted>

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Member Services Team by 5.00pm on [Date]. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 387969), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Children, young people and families	
Priority 1	Enhance the experiences of families, children and young people of the statutory SEND processes.
Developing provision and supporting Schools and Settings	
Priority 2	Develop greater confidence, competence and skills in mainstream settings, schools and academies, providing stronger leadership and support for SENCOs and others, across schools and settings.
Priority 3	Refocus specialist SEND provision, such as special schools and Resourced Provisions, on those children with the most significant and complex SEND.
Priority 4	Improve the leadership, co-ordination, deployment and collaborative working of specialist SEND specialist teaching, advisory and educational psychology services.
Planning ahead	
Priority 5	Develop and implement improved approaches to planning and securing specialist educational places for those children with the most significant and complex needs.
Strategic Leadership and Management	
Priority 6	Strengthen the management of the statutory SEND processes
Priority 7	Develop improved approaches to monitoring and accountability, especially in relation to the use and impact of High Needs funding in schools and other educational settings.
Priority 8	Develop a better shared understanding of the relationship between High Needs funding, current demands and volume and need.