## SEND REVIEW – FROM CONSULTATION RESPONSES TO SEND STRATEGY

Introduction

1. Following a review into aspects of provision and arrangements for SEND in Buckinghamshire, whose purpose was to identify priorities for the SEND strategy for the period 2017 – 2020, a consultation took place on the draft priorities for improvement that emerged from the SEND Review.

2. The process of the review itself was consultative, engaging in a continuing iterative dialogue with a range of stakeholders, throughout which common issues, concerns and priorities were identified. A series of Interim Feedback Seminars outlined key findings of the review and asked stakeholders to consider the implications for the future development of strategic priorities. A diagram setting out the process of the Review can be found at paragraph 54.

3. A schedule of Stakeholder Engagement is included at the end of this report.

4. In October a consultation was started where views were sought on a framework of 8 Improvement Priorities, a draft Vision Statement and with an opportunity to make related comments.

5. This report:
   - Analyses consultation responses
   - Highlights themes in consultation responses
   - Proposes an updated Vision Statement (paragraph 28)
   - Sets out the next steps in moving from Review findings, to Improvement Priorities to an SEND Strategy and action plan. (paragraph 29 provides a diagram of this)

Who responded to the Consultation?

6. Comments were sought through a web-based response portal, where individuals were able to complete a survey form on-line, or to download it, complete it and respond by email. Others used the consultation questions and made written responses. All responses, including a number that were received after the deadline, were accepted and analysed within the structure of questions. Where individuals did not stick to the given structure, every attempt was made to factor their comments into the analysis of responses.

7. 142 separate individuals made whole or partial responses to the consultation questions. They were asked to identify whether they were parents / carers, young people, professionals or "other". Those who described themselves as other included school governors, parent support group co-ordinators, service providers and a business charity. It appears from the consultation responses that most parents have children or young people with statements of SEND or EHC Plans and that most of these attend special schools . In January 2016 there were 3,353 Buckinghamshire resident children and young people with statements and EHC Plans and so the parental response is 0.1%. However, SENDIAS and FACT Bucks (the Parent Carer Forum) who responded, are able to reflect and/ or represent the views of parents and carers who they know.

Consultation respondents by type

- parents / carers: 33
- children / young people: 37
- professional: 46
- other: 26
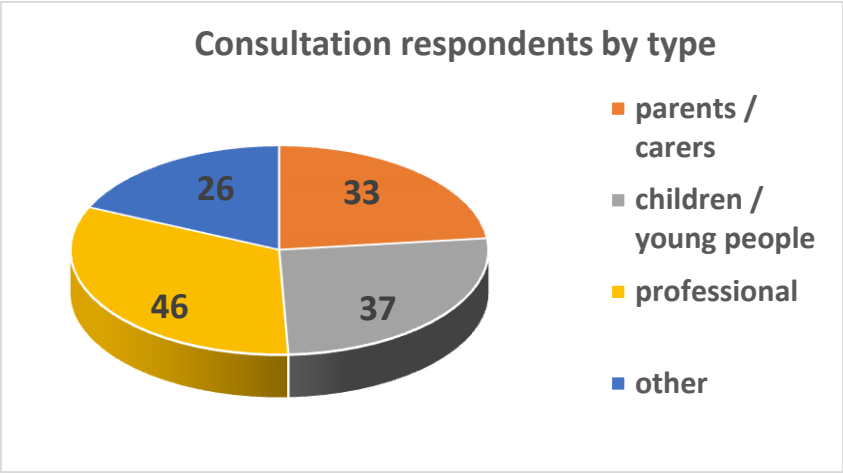
Is the draft Vision complete?

8. A draft Vision was included in the consultation to seek comments. It was drafted to take account of the aspirations of many of the stakeholders who had contributed to the Review.:

> **Our vision** for the future for Buckinghamshire children with SEN and disabilities, is that they will:
>
> - Be able to attend their local early education setting, school and college, and develop as an included and integrated member of their local community
> - Follow a smooth pathway through their education, supported by teachers and others with expertise and confidence and who will have high expectations of their learning potential
> - Be supported and assessed by high quality professionals who listen carefully to their views, and those of their parents, and involve them in decisions about their lives and learning
> - Receive a well-planned, complete and appropriately individualised education
> - Be happy, feel confident, feel welcome and valued at school and make the best progress possible
> - Be successful as an adult, living independently or with support, and engaging in purposeful and rewarding activity, in employment, positive and voluntary activities or work experience

9. Comments were sought on whether or not this draft Vision was complete, with respondents being asked to say if they agreed, disagreed or didn't know. 128 respondents commented as below:

Is the draft Vision complete?

- Yes: 44
- No: 55
- Don't Know: 29
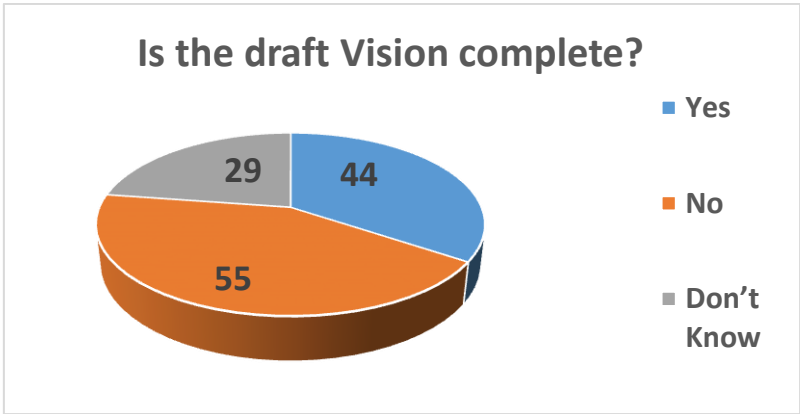
10. 26 individual respondents made suggestions for alternative text. 19 of these were emails and within the emails there was a series of responses with identical or almost identical text. Some proposed s shorter, sharper statement. Others preferred something longer and more descriptive. 60 of the 128 made suggestions for how the Vision could be improved. There was a small collection of duplicate responses that proposed "*Be able to attend the early education setting, school or college that it best able to support their needs." A* Parent Advice service proposed a focus on the principles of section 19 of the Children and Families Act. The young people's responses also made suggestions about important words and emphasis.

11. Inevitably, respondents' comments on the draft Vision provided an insight into many of their personal experiences. Some of the same suggestions and comments were extended into their comments about the priorities.

12. One respondent said that the draft Vision lacked aspirations for disabled children. Another felt that there should be reference to a shift in attitudes of professionals. A recurrent theme of "*what does severe and complex mean"* arose in responses about the Vision (although it is not a phrase in the draft vision), where some parents in particular were concerned that the Vision would focus on those with the most severe needs at the expense of those with less severe needs.

13. Some respondents were concerned about the interpretation of "*local community"* preferring to use the word "*appropriate"* rather than "*local*". Others wanted to use "*most appropriate"* and *"nearest appropriate"*. One respondent proposed "*Be able to attend the early education setting, school or college that it best able to support their needs."* One group of young people with SEND expressed concerns that they might not have been able to attend their local college, as well as saying that they wanted to be directly involved in decision making.

14. Decision making was commented by other (adult) respondents who felt that being listened to and being involved in decision making was not enough, and that they should jointly make the decision.

15. There were comments about the concept of young adults with SEND being successful, with this being challenged as an inappropriate concept, and that it should be replaced with "*fulfilling their potential" or "reaching their potential".* Another respondent felt that the Vision was too simplistic for the reality and parents and carers, explaining that "*many know that their children and young people cannot achieve these ambitions however well meant."* proposed that the Vision should reflect the aspirations of the Children and Families Act and say " *…that they will have the opportunity to enjoy as normal life as possible."* , and that the approach would " *…minimize the effect of their special educational needs and disabilities"* … with a focus of working with children and families to ".. *discern aspirational outcomes in each case".* The young people's responses showed that being a successful adult was important for those young people both with and without SEND.

16. One respondent felt that the Vision did not take into account that the culture in education in Buckinghamshire might not want to change to support the Vision, and felt that the Vision could usefully talk about directly tackling a cultural position in mainstream that is "*more inclined to expel special needs children rather than use limited resources on 'expensive' 'difficult' children*." There were a number of expressions of low confidence in mainstream

schools from parents and professionals. The young people from the mainstream school did not express any lack of confidence in their school.

17. Many respondents found it hard to comment on the Vision without exploring the steps towards achieving it, with one saying the Vision should be directly linked to SMART targets. Another respondent said the Vision needed to include more practical considerations and that "*As it stands it is a series of platitudes with no significance*". The same respondent felt that the Vision should make specific reference to ages, in particular post 16 and post 18 and that there should be an explicit reference to financial parameters.

18. One respondent felt that there should have been a detailed report to accompany the consultation in order that the connection between the large amount of data and information collected by the review could be connected with the Vision. Another said that the consultation should be about a Plan, not a Vision.

A group of young people from Princes Risborough School

19. A group of young people who attend an Upper School in Buckinghamshire, but who do not have SEND, commented on the draft Vision. They felt that the best way to help disabled young people is to support them reach their goals, and that these could be whatever the young person wanted their goals to be. Another young person felt that there needs to be more work to help SEND young people fit in with everybody else, and discussed the need for more work to stop the stereotypes of disabled people, and that this may need more education and awareness for people.

20. One young person explained that their brother has Autism and they felt that he is treated differently because of his disability, however he is very able and doesn't want to be treated any differently. The young person said that if people had a better understanding of the disability then it would help young people with SEND fit in better in the community.

Aylesbury College – students with SEND

21. The young people at Aylesbury College said they would have been upset if they could not have attended their local college. They commented on the importance of their teachers in helping them to move from one educational setting to another, and spoke passionately about the need to make their own decisions. The group felt that an individualised education was very important to them and described how the teaching and learning establishment needs to make variations to meet their individual needs.

22. In talking about the word "happy", they said that they are not happy every day for lots of reasons but that was acceptable. They agreed that it is more important to be comfortable and safe in their surroundings and that feeling welcomed and valued would help their self-development.

23. When discussing being successful as an adult, the young people felt that this could be split into 2 different visions – one for living independently and one for employment. One student said that they like to be respected and treated like an adult, and the encouragement to be more employable helps her to do that. Another student felt that it was more important to be ready for work than living independently.

24. When asked to consider the draft vision, the responses of the two groups of students had areas of similarity and difference. Each group of young people was supported to apply measures of importance to each bullet point in the Draft Vision. 6 is very important. 1 is not important. One group assigned numbers. The other allocated low, medium and high priorities. The chart below aims to show areas of commonality. The third group of young people focused on the Priority Framework and did not comment on the Vision.

Bullet Point		Group with no SEND	Group with SEND
1	Local education setting, integrated member of local community	3	5
2	Smooth pathway through education	4	4
3	High quality professionals who listen and involve them in decisions	3	6
4	Well planned, complete & individualised education	3	6
5	Be happy, confident, fell valued and welcome and make the best progress possible	5	5
6	Be successful as an adult	6	5 to 6

25. Both groups of young people gave similar importance to Bullet points 2 (smooth pathway through education); Bullet Point 5 (Be happy, confident etc) and Bullet Point 6 (Be successful as an adult).

Proposal for Vision

26. It is clear from consultation responses that there are many different views about the detail that a Vision Statement should include. The SEND Strategy should set the context for the Vision, and explain its purpose: to be aspirational, include statements of value, and include an indication of time frame.

27. Definitions of and commentary about a Vision Statement have been included below, because there were a range of different interpretations of what a Vision statement should be, in the consultation responses. Three definitions are:

"An aspirational description of what an organization would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid-term or long-term future. It is intended to serves as a clear guide for choosing current and future courses of action." www.businessdictionary.com

"A vision statement can be as simple as a single sentence or can span a short paragraph. Regardless of the individual details and nuances, all effective vision statements define the core ideals that give a business shape and direction." www.businessnewsdaily.com *(April 16)*

"A vision statement, or simply a vision*, is a public declaration that schools or other educational organizations use to describe their high-level goals for the future—what they hope to achieve if they successfully fulfil their organizational purpose or mission. A vision statement may describe a school's loftiest ideals, its core organizational values, its long-term objectives, or what it hopes its students will learn or be capable of doing after graduating.*

Generally speaking, a vision statement expresses a hoped-for future reality, while a mission statement declares the practical commitments and actions that a school believes are needed to achieve its vision. While a vision statement describes the end goal—the change sought by a school—a mission statement may describe its broad academic and operational assurances, as well as its commitment to its students and community." www.edglossary.org *– glossary for educational reform*

28. It is proposed that the Vision Statement should be sharper, shorter, aspirational with a more well defined and explained link between the building blocks for the future – the Improvement Priorities. The Strategy should then expand the Vision into actions and emphasis, with an indication of time frame and performance measures.(se paragraph 29)

Proposed amended Draft Vision

Our vison is that all our children and young people with SEND will:

- achieve the very best they can

- attend a school or educational setting as close to their home as possible

- be taught and supported by skilled professionals who have high expectations for their progress and learning potential

- enjoy learning, feel valued and be confident

- be actively involved in decisions that affect them

- fulfil their potential as confident adults in their chosen community

Framework for the SEND Strategy

29. The Improvement Priorities would then develop from the Vision in the following way, thus providing the framework for the SEND Strategy.

The Vision

Improvement Priorities

IP 1
IP 2
IP 8
IP 3
IP 7
IP 4
IP 6
IP 5

ACTION PLAN
who will do what, when, with whom, by what time and with what

Performance Measures
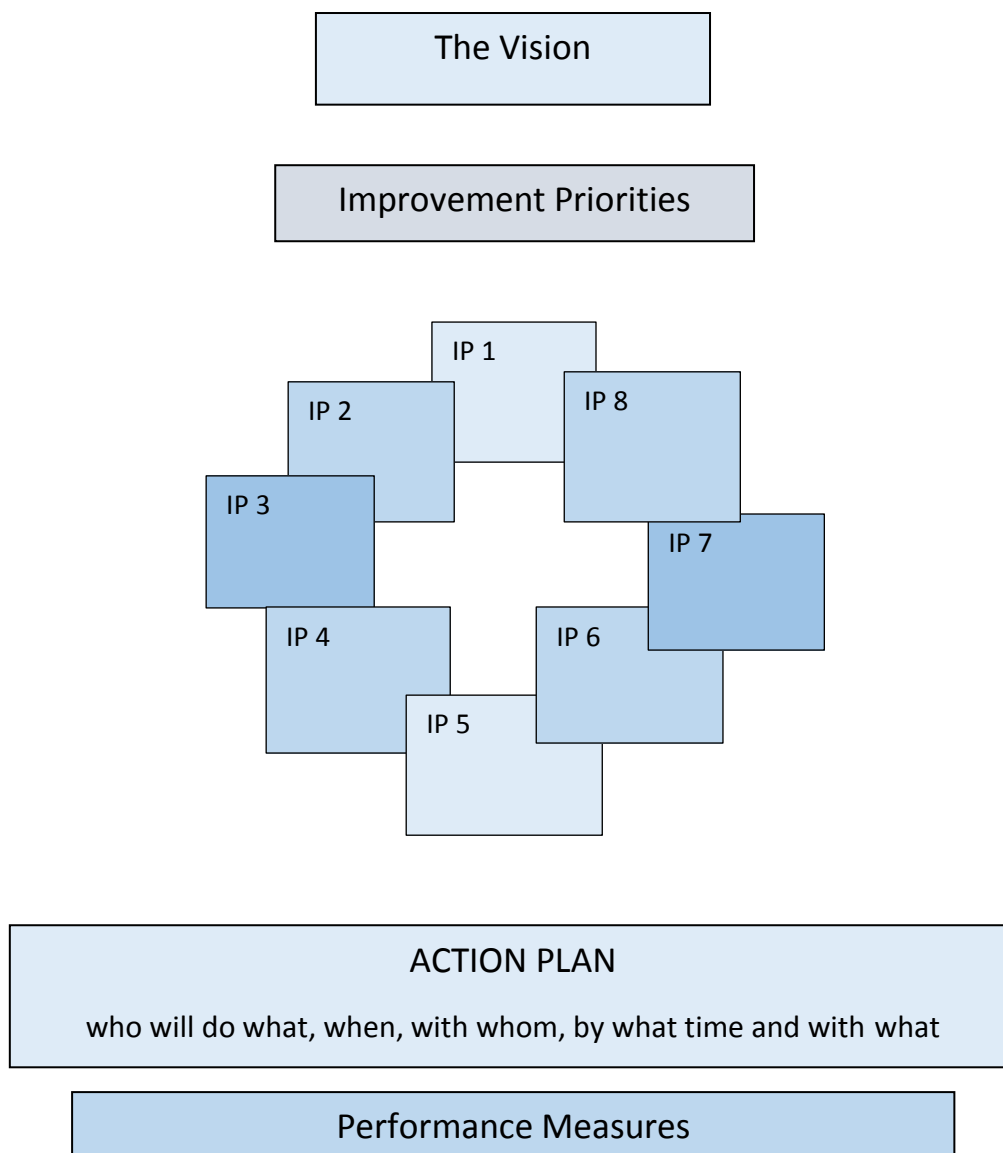
Improvement Priorities

30. All respondents were asked to answer whether they agreed that the 8 Priorities covered the most important things that we needed to improve. 75 people responded to this question.

31. Respondents were then asked if they had any suggestions for Priorities that may have been missed. Not all respondents responded to this, but where they did, the following were common themes:

    a. Explicit reference to early years and Colleges of further education, as well as schools.

    b.   The integration of a graduated response across all services so that families and professionals are clearer about what is delivered by which service and when
    c.   Strategic leadership of the whole SEN area
    d.   Investment in preventative work
    e.   Accountability of those organisations that receive funding, for its use and related outcomes
    f.   Bringing disparate organisations and systems together
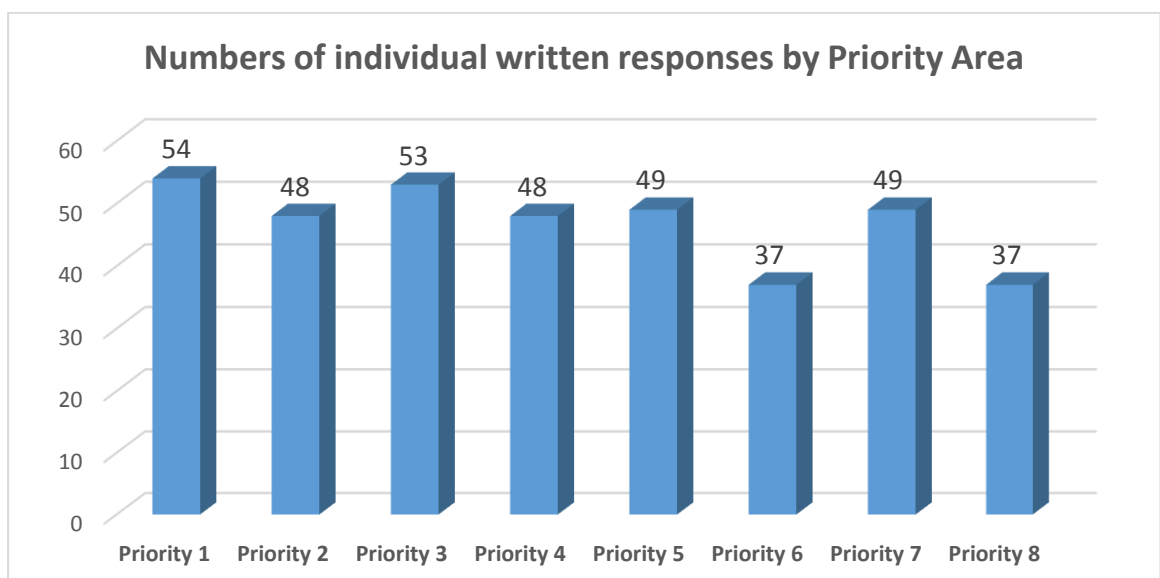
Delivering the Improvement Priorities

32. 56 responses were received to the question "*How do you think we could deliver the priorities?*". Comments and suggestions ranged from "*don't know*" or "*show me your plans and I'll comment…*" to those seeing increased funding for schools as the answer. Some suggested reducing waiting times for external specialists, or making traded support services no-cost. A number of respondents referred to the need for better training for mainstream schools and SENCOs, with others seeing collaborative working with a range of specialists as important.

33. Making better use by the local authority of the Parent Carer Forum, SENDIAS and working with parents and other parent groups was proposed, with one respondent asking what plans the Council had to create a SENDIAS service, and others suggesting the convening of parent groups to discuss issues and concerns. Openness and transparency was a common theme across some responses.

34. A strong theme was collaboration in moving forward. Some respondents wanted the Local Authority to be more directive in their approach with schools and governing bodies, setting out their duties and responsibilities, with an emphasis on financial accountability.

Comments on Individual Priorities

35. Respondents were asked to comment on each improvement priority. The numbers of responses by each Priority varied.

Numbers of individual written responses by Priority Area

Priority	Responses
Priority 1	54
Priority 2	48
Priority 3	53
Priority 4	48
Priority 5	49
Priority 6	37
Priority 7	49
Priority 8	37

36. A group of young people with SEND who attend Alfriston Special Academy commented on the Improvement Priorities. They indicated which words in the Improvement Priorities were most important to them and gave some ideas for related action.

37. The words that they chose to help them in their discussions were:

Words identified as important by 12 young people from Alfriston Special Academy

Priority				
1	Enhance	Families	Young people	
2	Greater confidence, competence, skills	Leadership	Schools	
3	Special schools	Resourced provision	children	Complex SEND
4	Leadership	Co-ordination	Collaborative working	
5	Educational	Significant	complex	
6	Strengthen	Statutory	SEND	
7	High Needs	Educational	settings	
8	Understanding	relationship		

38. The young people made a number of comments that are important in relation to progressing action arising from the review:
    a. Young people should help other young people because they can give advice and support
    b. Most mainstream settings, including colleges, do not have the skills that a special school has
    c. Everyone has a right to education, even if you need 1:1 support
    d. There needs to be someone good in charge, who gets involved and understands them, rather than someone who sits in an office making decisions
    e. People who work in SEND need to be patient and skilled
    f. There was a difference in opinion in the group on whether or not a specialist college was needed to get the right level of skills in the staff, or whether a department in a mainstream college is a positive thing and the young person wouldn't be labelled
    g. The young people realised that it was important to know what High Needs funding was spent on as there was not endless funding available

39. Comments on each priority follow. The comments lent themselves to recording under separate headings, particularly as many respondents however pursued the same theme across each priority. The headings used to organise Priority by Priority responses are:

    - Local authority leadership and oversight
    - Communication and clarification
    - A person centred approach
    - The statutory process
    - Children and young people

- Supporting parents
- Training
- Schools and settings
- Financial matters

40. Many of the comments made by respondents indicate those areas that they are worried about, or have experienced a scenario that they have found difficult, or been involved in a process that was unsatisfactory for them or have received a decision that they did not agree with or feel they were not fully involved in. It is important to ensure these concerns are taken account of in the development of Performance Indicators that will help to monitor the impact and success of the new Strategy.

Priority 1

> **Enhance the experience of families, children and young people of the statutory SEND processes**

41. All respondents who commented agreed with this priority. Some specific suggestions and comments were made:

Local authority leadership and oversight
- This should be the key priority.
- Effective strategic leadership is needed and it should encompass all areas of SEND.
- An approach to systematic measurement of success is needed
- Keep the Local Offer up to date

Communication and clarification

- We need to understand what "*Enhance*" looks like – perhaps use the word "*improve"* instead.
- Jargon free language please.
- Can SEND officers be better at communicating with parents?

A person centred approach

- Parents also need to understand the process, and should not need to chase for information.
- Ensure parents are kept informed
- Adopt a caring, active listening approach in meetings

Children and young people

- Young people should be able to help and support other young people

The statutory process

- A realistic timetable of actions is needed, with only exceptional reasons meaning timescales are missed.
- Offer meeting to all parents for each EHC assessments

Supporting parents
- Approaches to support networking between parents would help.
- Support and work with the PCF (FACT Bucks)

<u>Training</u>

- Increased training for mainstream schools is a must, with a focus on early identification and intervention for early signs of SEND.
- Local Authority staff need to be trained as well as SENCOs

<u>Schools and settings</u>

- SENCOs are vital and need supporting.
- They need to be giving the same messages as SEN Officers.
- SENCOs can falsely raise parents hopes by suggesting independent provision or other high cost provision that the LA would not support

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.**

42. There was agreement from all respondents with some supplementary and explanatory comments:

<u>Local authority leadership and oversight</u>

- There needs to be a minimum provision guarantee from mainstream schools that is developed and agreed between schools and the LA.
- Does the LA have any " teeth" where provision in mainstream schools is inadequate
- Need a link EP to each school and setting
- Recruitment and retention is an enormous issue – specialist provision should be used to support mainstream

<u>Children and Young People</u>

- People who work in SEND need to be patient and skilled
- Sometimes you get "labelled" if you go to a special school or college
- Mainstream settings do not have the skills that a special school has
-

<u>Schools and settings</u>

- SENCOs should be on school leadership teams
- Mainstream schools do not have the skills and/or adequate provision for the needs now present in mainstream schools
- Colleges do not have the skills that a special school has
- No practical support available to support SENCOs
- Difficult experiences with mainstream schools, including being encouraged to keep the child or young person at home
- Need to focus on early intervention and early education settings

<u>Training</u>

- Encourage and develop SENCO CPD
- Target SENDCOs who are new to Buckinghamshire for support.
- More training is key – using those with disabilities themselves is commended

Priority 3

> **Refocus specialist SEND provision, such as Special Schools and Resourced Provisions, on those children with the most significant and complex SEND.**

43. There was broad agreement across all respondents that specialist provision was needed. Some respondents expressed a lack of confidence in mainstream schools and expressed their concerns about the vulnerability of children with SEND and a consequent incompatibility with mainstream education. Others felt that a greater clarity on which children should go to special schools and which should not, was needed. Others asked if Buckinghamshire needed all of the current specialist provision, and whether or not some specialist provision could close with a movement of children from special school to mainstream. Comments showed polarised views. Experiences seemed to be different. One respondent proposed the creation of an "*interdependence between mainstream and special schools with appropriate funding.".*

<u>Local authority leadership and oversight</u>

- The priority is clear and unambiguous
- A review of ARPs may be helpful
- Specialist provision must be fairly and equitably distributed between all children in accordance with their needs

<u>Communication and clarification</u>

- What does significant and complex mean?
- Proposal to change the words in the Priority to "*Focus on quality in specialist SEND provision, such as special schools and resourced provisions to meet the needs of the children who need it."*

<u>A person centred approach</u>
- You have to treat each case as an individual case so you can support them efficiently
- We moved to Buckinghamshire to get our child a place in special school. She was unhappy in mainstream school and has flourished in special school.
- It is not enough to be listened to and be involved in making the decision – we want to jointly make the decision about what school.

<u>The statutory process</u>
- Those with additional needs may be denied access to specialist placements
- Parents are sourcing private diagnoses to present evidence to the LA for their EHC assessments

- Decision making on placement should involve health and social care professionals – very often it is the package of therapy and specialist support that is being sought
- Faster and accurate placement of children with SEND will avoid a later wastage of resources on children incorrectly or late diagnosed.
- A more efficient process of approving EHCPs, which is aligned to what happens in other comparable LAs, needs to be developed.

Children and Young People
- Children with MLD need the specialist provision in a special school
- There are already too many children in mainstream schools that cannot cope
- Worries that children with SEND in mainstream will be subject to bullying and abuse.
- A move to increase placement of children with SEND in mainstream schools would compromise the safety focus of the Children and Young People's Plan
- Children are in special because they have failed to thrive in mainstream
- Some children and young people can't cope with the physical environment of a busy mainstream school
- We already have too many children with anxiety, self-injurious behaviour and school phobia – would they be considered to have severe and complex needs?

Schools and settings

- Concerns at the implications for additionally resourced provisions (ARPs), that children with more complex needs may be expected to attend them
- Special Schools provide a place of physical and emotional safety.
- Outreach could be provided from special schools and resourced provisions to help to develop and spread skills to mainstream schools
- More provision is needed in the north of the County to avoid unnecessarily long journeys.

Training

- The upskilling of the mainstream teaching workforce to deal with more SEND-related issues within mainstream should result in the ability to apply greater focus and resources on the children with serious difficulties requiring a special school place.

Financial matters

- This priority is written to save money
- More funding is needed

Priority 4

> **Improve the co-ordination, leadership, deployment and collaborative working of specialist SEND specialist teaching, advisory and educational psychology services**

44. There was agreement from all those who made additional comments, with some saying the intention is clear and others making specific comments about different services, and organisation and delivery of services. Some respondents referred to point of access to services – whether with or without an EHC Plan.

Local authority leadership and oversight

- Recruitment of the correct person in the leadership role is key for this priority to be achieved
- The Educational Psychology Service needs to have greater priority than to be put with specialist teaching services.
- There are difficulties in recruitment of specialist staff, especially educational psychologists
- Building relationships and trust between the local authority and schools / settings is important in a fast changing environment
- To achieve a more collaborative environment with a shared sense of purpose , there is firstly a need to build trust and respect between BCC SEND teams and Children's Services leadership, with special and mainstream schools
- The current recommissioning of therapies has highlighted the need for coordination in key areas to prevent overlap or more importantly gaps, as well as variable service delivery.
- The strategy should reflect the reduction in local authority services
- Collaborative working includes with professionals in health and social care services

Communication and clarification

- Propose replacing "*Improve the leadership*" with "*Effective leadership should be implemented to ensure …*"

A person centred approach

- There needs to be a more joined up approach fro the GP to the school to the hospital

The statutory process

- Whilst we understand that EHC assessments are putting a considerable burden on skilled staff, it is unacceptable not to provide a full EHC assessment when it is requested by teaching professionals
- Improve access to specialist teaching support, training, consultation and assessment /intervention without the need for EHC plan, especially in the areas of SLCN and ASD.
- It will make a huge difference if Specialist teachers are able to work with all children regardless of EHC plans, as then there would be preventative work supporting children much earlier on, which would truly support a graduated approach.
- EHC assessments should have a higher priority than other SEND work

Supporting parents

- Communication between schools and parents needs to be improved.
- Parents and professionals want to work together collaboratively – but it doesn't always feel as if it has worked.

- Provide professional training for SENCOs and CPD, through interaction with special school staff.

Schools and settings

- How are new approaches to be found that save money and still offer "support around the school"?
- Remember to use all expertise available, including the Portage Service

Financial matters

- Investment is needed in front line professionals
- Targeted High Needs funding to pupils without EHCPlans needs to be reviewed and educational settings need to be more creative with how they support SEND.

Priority 5

> **Develop and implement improved approaches to planning and securing specialist educational places for those children with the most severe and complex needs.**

45. There was no real disagreement with this Priority. Comments related to how it might be implemented, and expressed views about specialist provision and shortages of places. Some re3spondents commented on the costs of an increasing dependency on specialist provision, with others commenting that specialist provision should not be restricted to those with severe or significant and complex needs. Comments are recorded below.

Local authority leadership and oversight

- Specialist placements need to be available for children with additional needs – not just significant and complex
- There are increasing trends for children to be taught in special school
- There is no suitable state funded school provision in Buckinghamshire for high functioning pupils on the autism spectrum
- There has been a lack of ability to forecast student numbers, particularly around ASD
- The behaviour strategy lacks leadership and direction
- What is the philosophy around special school places and academies
- What if students from other local authorities fill up places in special academies in Buckinghamshire?
- Need to know more about numbers of pupils being educated outside Buckinghamshire
- Need a more rigorous approach to only using school places outside Buckinghamshire if there is not provision in county
- Consider visiting current specialist educational establishments to research the pros and cons , so as not to make any obvious mistakes

Children and young people

- Many children are not given a place in their chosen school
- Families need to be supported if their child is taught at home (refers to high functioning ASD)

<u>The Statutory Process</u>

- Better representation at Tribunal to ensure affluent parents do not secure costly places in Dyslexia schools

<u>Supporting parents</u>

- Parents know their rights but can lack confidence and trust – this exacerbates the situation

<u>Schools and settings</u>

- Schools need more links with specialist provision and ARPs

<u>Financial matters</u>

- There has been a 15% increase in funded special school places in under 3 years.
- Do we need better negotiation with providers to ensure lower costs?
- Share financial limitations with all stakeholders

Priority 6

> **Strengthen the management of the statutory SEND process**

46. There is full agreement with this as a priority for improvement. The majority of comments focus on leadership and management, with some referring to specific aspects of systems, such as decision making and mediation.

   <u>Local authority leadership and oversight</u>

- These are predominantly internal management and financial oversight items which are the responsibility of the Local Authority and its Officers.
- Consider the current leadership's ability to deliver.
- Only the highest quality leadership will meet the challenges of increasing demand, diminishing resources and the moral purpose to secure the best outcomes for every child.
- There needs to be a shake up of SEN officers. Children are falling through the gaps due to workloads and high turn over.

   <u>Communication and clarification</u>

- This priority may be redundant if you do what is required to achieve other priorities.

   <u>A person centred approach</u>

   <u>The statutory process</u>

- It is essential that the legal process is delivered effectively
- Processes must be fair, firm, robust and transparent and use rigorous decision making
- There needs to be a stronger "sell" of mediation before Tribunals develop
- There may be a need for stronger management of the decision making processes relating to individual cases.

- Do not impose placement of a pupil, without ability to deliver confirmed by Governing Body.
- Does monitoring need to be improved?
- The EHC process is supposed to encourage collaboration by all parties

<u>Children and young people</u>

- Remember the child

<u>Training</u>

- Lack of proper training in mainstream and lack of capacity to help
- All SENCOs should be aware of the process and all changes should be clearly fed to schools

<u>Schools and settings</u>

- Develop SEN and head workshops for mainstream schools, and explain the graduated response?
- Schools need to get on board more and learn. Learn, learn and support, support, support.

<u>Financial</u>

- There is a need to link individual decisions to affordability, financial budgets and plans. This implies far greater access and transparency of data.
- Ensure funding is available to schools and settings for any defined responsibilities.

Priority 7

> **Develop improved approaches to monitoring and accountability, especially in relation to the use and impact of High Needs finding in schools and other educational settings.**

47. There was no disagreement about this as a Priority for improvement. As with other priorities, respondents made comments, suggestions and were keen to know how it would be implemented.

<u>Local authority leadership and oversight</u>

- Despite the need for a more integrated approach to the management of the SEND budget, BCC is not in charge of all the levers required to accomplish this due to the academisation process. In a situation where BCC has responsibility but no authority the only way forward is to develop a set of high level plans that can be agreed by the key providers/stakeholders and then maintain regular and transparent communications.

<u>Communication and clarification</u>

- Are we to assume this is to manage a reduction of income? If yes will need details and an open discussion between all stakeholders.

The statutory process

- Improved EHC Plans would enable more effective monitoring.
- Has there been an audit of recent plans?
- Funding needs to be brought in line with the 'outcomes highlighted in the education health and care plans. This will then reflect the provision required to meet a young person's needs

Training

- Improved training for SENCOs is essential

Schools and settings

- All SEN provision (including mainstream) should be audited as a baseline
- High Needs funding in schools usually has to be incorporated into existing LSA provision, as it is difficult to manage smaller sums of money, e.g. £800 unless it is for specific equipment or programme
- I like the idea of local groups of settings and schools looking at HNBF together and deciding current priorities. This feels like a good delegation of accountability. However, there would need to be really clear managerial support for decision makers to ensure they fully understood the purpose of HNBF and there was equity across different groups.

Financial Matters

- Top-up funding needs to reflect the provision required. Currently it is based on a young person's description of needs, rather than the cost of providing for those needs. Consideration also needs to be given to allocating funding for institutional costs as well as for individual pupils.
- This will need to be in line with the national agenda for adjustments to the fair funding and the national funding formula.

Priority 8

> **Develop a better shared understanding of the relationship between High Needs funding, current demands and volume and need.**

48. Some respondents considered that this priority was an action that linked with other priorities. Some found it difficult to understand its meaning with one respondent suggesting that having a better understanding is not adequate for an ambition.

Local authority leadership and oversight

- There seems to be a lack of anything quantitative in terms of benchmarking or outcomes for students.

- This priority requires an honest discussion of how "selection has costs".

Communication and clarification

- Alternative wording was suggested "*Ensuring that provision costs no more than is allocated through government funding.*"
- Communication pathways need to be set up clearly
- What SEND data do we have? Who will collate data, evidence efficacy and how will it be shared with stakeholders?

The statutory process

- reference to decision making which is reported to schools as being based on whether or not a school has provided 13.5 hours of support – feeling that the discussion should not be about hours – but the needs of the child.

General Comments

49. Respondents were asked if they had any other comments. These fell into a number of categories. These are summarised below.

50. There were comments about the way in which the consultation exercise had been undertaken:
    a. Disappointment at the brevity of the consultation text, because:
       i. A detailed report including all review findings was not available at the point of consultation, and
       ii. more information on the way in which the Improvement Priorities would be out into place was not included.
    b. Both praise and criticism for the way in which the Review had been carried out, with a desire to conclude the process and put the resultant plan in to action
    c. Concerns for the unknown and the impact this would have on children and young people, and in particular, special schools and the current population pf children who attended
    d. That a Strategy needs to be presented before the Improvement Priorities can be finalised.

51. There were comments about schools and settings, the statutory process and support services.
    a. Little if any emphasis was given to those pupils at SEN support in schools, with a consistent emphasis on EHC Plans
    b. There seemed to be a reliance on the EHC assessment process to bring professionals together, when it is clear from the graduated approach in the SEN Code of Practice that this should be happening earlier.
    c. Recurrent frustration from schools and settings, and in SEND fieldwork services, about the shortage of some fieldwork support and the different ways of operating of others, including within the same service.
    d. A belief amongst parents and some specialist provider responses, that mainstream schools were unable to make the provision necessary for children with SEN, including (in some responses) those with more moderate needs.

e. A belief amongst some parents that being involved in decision making, means that they expect to jointly making the decision – and that this leads to disappointment and frustration and does not build and strengthen relationships between parents and decision makers

f. Parents want the best school for their child or young person. The words *"suitable"* or *" appropriate" seemed to be provocative when used in written text.*

g. That early education and post 16 and further education needs explcit attention and emphasis in the SEND Strategy and action plan

52. There were also comments about confidence in the next steps:

(i) A concern about the capacity of the current structure to deliver radical improvements across the local authority

(ii) That Buckinghamshire has a history of well-meaning proposals that flounder expensively because of a lack of principled and focused leadership

The Application of Consultation Responses to the current framework of Vision and Improvement Priorities.

53. A new draft Vision has been proposed (see paragraph 27). Improvement priorities need to be supported with a structure of actions, milestones and performance measures / indicators. An overarching SEND Strategy needs to be prepared.

54. With the exception of Improvement Priority 8, all Improvement Priorities were largely understood. It is suggested that a change in the language used for Priority 8 is used, so that it reads:

Suggested new wording for Improvement Priority 8

> Put in place a financial strategy that explains and ensures open and transparent links between:
>
> - Demands arising from the statutory SEND Process (top-up funding, specialist placement and transport);
> - Decisions made about EHC assessments, Plans and placement
> - Funding available from Government in the High Needs Block and Council funded budgets
> - Predictions linked to the pupil and student population, in terms of numbers of predicted levels and type of need
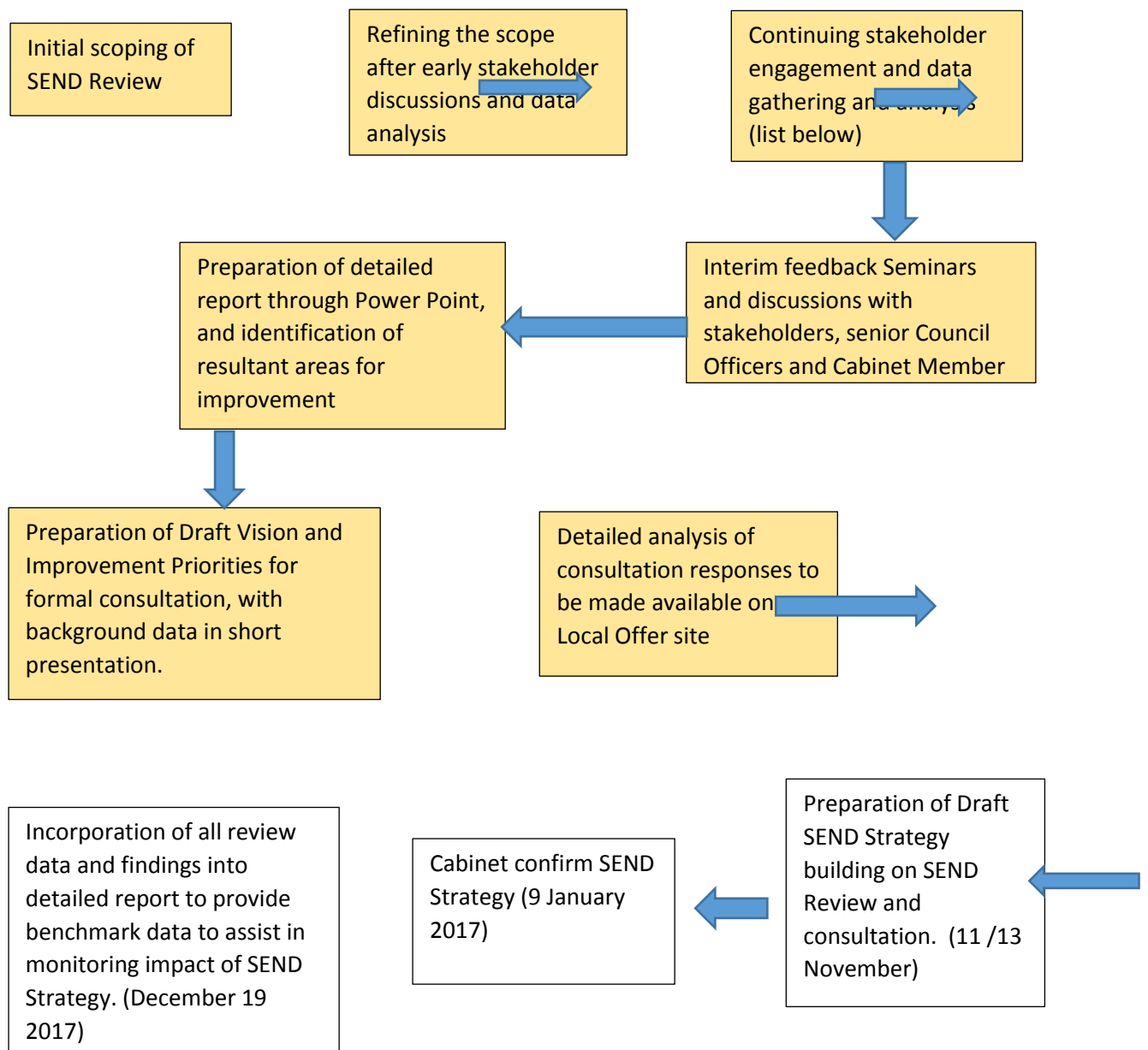
NEXT STEPS

55. It is suggested that:

(i) A timeline is published on the Local Offer that sets out what will happen when over the next 2-3 months as the SEND Strategy becomes finalised and secures elected member comment and then approval.

(ii)   <u>A summary "picture" is published</u> that reflects on the review process and sets out the suite of documents under preparation, and those available now, so that stakeholders are able to extend their engagement from the successful Interim Feedback sessions in the summer, into the translation of findings into action with a view to turn the tide on some current trends in Buckinghamshire that are creating a significant capacity and affordability challenge.

An example of what such a picture might look like is set out below with yellow rectangles indicating available information documents.

Initial scoping of SEND Review	Refining the scope after early stakeholder discussions and data analysis	Continuing stakeholder engagement and data gathering and analysis (list below)

Interim feedback Seminars and discussions with stakeholders, senior Council Officers and Cabinet Member

Preparation of detailed report through Power Point, and identification of resultant areas for improvement

Preparation of Draft Vision and Improvement Priorities for formal consultation, with background data in short presentation.

Detailed analysis of consultation responses to be made available on Local Offer site

Preparation of Draft SEND Strategy building on SEND Review and consultation. (11 /13 November)

Cabinet confirm SEND Strategy (9 January 2017)

Incorporation of all review data and findings into detailed report to provide benchmark data to assist in monitoring impact of SEND Strategy. (December 19 2017)

SEND Review : Schedule of Stakeholder Engagement – January to July 2016

Month	Stakeholder Group / Individual	Nature of engagement
January	SEN team manager	Individual discussion
January	SEN team manager	Individual discussion
January	PRU / AP Commissioner	Individual discussion
February	Health / social care commissioner (1)	Individual discussion
February	Member of SEND team	Individual discussion
February	Head of SEND	Individual discussion
February	SEND Board - meeting	Board meeting
February	Lead person – Buckinghamshire Parent Carer Forum (FACT Bucks)	Individual discussion
February	Primary Education Board – representative Primary Head Teachers	Board meeting
February	Parent Partnership Officer – SENDIASS Bucks	Individual discussion
February	Children's Resources Panel	Decision making panel
February	Health and social care commissioner (2)	Individual discussion
February	Children with Disabilities Review Consultant	Individual discussion
February	Schools Funding Officer	Individual discussion
February	Bucks association of secondary head teachers (BASH)	Presentation & discussion
February	Special School Head Teacher (BP)	Discussion & school visit
February	Health – designated clinical officer	Individual discussion
February	Data and Performance officer	Individual discussion
February	Special School Head Teacher (SD)	Discussion & school visit
February	SENCO Conference	Input & questionnaire
February	Head of SEND for BLT specialist teaching teams	Individual discussion
February	Individual BLT specialist teachers and team leaders	Individual discussions
March	Special School head teacher (AS)	Discussion & school visit
March	Special School / PRU Head teacher (K)	Discussion & school visit
March	Special School Head Teacher (CWF)	Discussion & school visit
March	Special School Head Teacher (PS)	Discussion & school visit
March	Special School Head Teacher (HHS)	Discussion & school visit
March	Special School Head Teacher (FDS)	Discussion & school visit
March	Special School Head Teacher (WS)	Discussion & school visit
March	Special School Head Teacher (CGS)	Discussion & school visit
March	Special School Head Teacher (W Prim PRU)	Discussion & school visit
March	Head of SEND	Individual discussion
March	Schools Forum	Input & discussion
March	Transport Exceptions Panel	Observation & reflection
March	Senior commissioner – specialist placements	Individual discussion
March	BLT senior leadership team	Group phone discussion
March	Parent supporter	Phone discussion
March	Individual mainstream primary head teacher	Phone discussion
April	Director of Education	Individual discussion
April	SEN team managers	Group discussion
April	Educational Psychologist Team	Group discussion
April	Head Teacher and Lead of Primary ARP	Discussion & school visit
April	Head teacher and lead of Secondary ARP	Discussion & school visit
April	ARP leads – teachers or staff in charge	Group discussion
April	Extended SEND Board – Interim Feedback to confirm Scoping	Presentation and discussion

April	BLT Head of SEND for Specialist Teacher teams	Individual discussion
May	Learning, Skills and Prevention SLT – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
May	PRU / AP Commissioner	Individual discussion
May	Special School Governors – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
May	Director of Education and Head of SEND	Discussion and reflection
May	BASH – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
May	Special School Head Teacher (PS)	Discussion
May	Schools Forum – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
May	Special School Head Teachers – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
May	One Council Board – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
May	Therapy Commissioner	Individual discussion
May	SEND Panel observation	Observation & reflection
May	BLT specialist teacher – team leaders	Discussion & reflection
June	Therapy – service providers	Discussion
June	Parent Partnership Officer - SENDIASS	Discussion
June	Primary Head Teacher Hub (1) – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
June	Primary Head Teacher Hub (2) – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
June	Primary Head Teacher Hub (3) – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
June	Schools Forum – Interim Feedback	Presentation & discussion
June	Special Schools Admission Panel	Observation and reflection
June	Secondary Head Teachers – Sub-group of BASH	Discussion on issues
Jan-July	Meetings of SEND Board – agenda item and update reports	Discussion on issues