



Report to Cabinet

Date:	Cabinet – 2 March 2021
Title:	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2021 – 23 including the SEND Improvement Plan
Relevant Councillor(s)	Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Author:	Simon James, Service Director Education
Wards affected	None specific

Recommendations:

To approve the updated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2021 – 23 (Appendix 1), and the associated SEND Improvement Plan (Appendix 2).

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy expired in December 2020, and work has been going over the last 12 months to review progress against the Strategy and develop a new Strategy for the coming 3 years. This report provides a summary of this work and sets out the key elements of the new Strategy, and the associated SEND Improvement Plan.
- 1.2 The Strategy is a key document for the anticipated Ofsted/Care Quality Commission Local Area SEND inspection that is expected to happen in 2021.
- 1.3 The Strategy is a partnership document that has been co-produced. It is “owned” and will be delivered by the local authority and key partners across the local area, including schools, health services and the voluntary and community sector.

2. Content of report

- 1.4 The new Strategy aims to capture the high aspirations Buckinghamshire has for all our children, recognising the additional support those with SEND may need to be able to achieve their goals. As such, it adopts the same vision that the Children and Young People’s Partnership has set out for all children.

- 1.5 A public consultation was undertaken between 2 March and 6 April 2020 to seek the views of stakeholders on the vision, principles and aims of the Strategy. These were developed following engagement activities that started with young people at the “Shout Out for SEND” Conference in November 2019 and via the SEND Youth Forum. The Conference Report that details findings from this event can be found at: <https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/site.page?id=0Z90kxl6L>
[Fw](#)
- 1.6 The views of parents/carers, schools and other professionals were critical to the development of the Strategy and a number of events took place to secure meaningful input. These included:
- 2 sessions with parents/carers facilitated alongside FACT Bucks, the Parent Carer Forum.
 - Attendance at School Collaboration meetings for engagement with school professionals.
 - Meetings with professionals working in a range of other services supporting children and young people with SEND including those in the local authority, health and the voluntary and community sector.
- 1.7 Following these events a multi-agency group developed the draft Strategy, having evaluated and RAG rated progress against the improvement priorities identified in the 2017 – 2020 Strategy. A number of strategies from other Local Authorities were also reviewed, as well as guidance from the DfE on what a SEND Strategy should include. FACT Bucks and Bucks SENDIAS Service were integral to this process, representing the voice of parents and carers.
- 1.8 Coproduction has been a key element of the development of this new Strategy, in particular with FACT Bucks:
- “The strategy development process has been a great example of coproduction - at the outset I asked for it to be an open, honest and coproduced process aimed at raising our aspirations as a Local Area. This has been delivered in full. Parents and Carers welcomed the tone and direction of the strategy during the consultations ... We will now work together to take it forward to focus on key aspects to improve the offer being made and ultimately improve the outcomes of SEND Children and young people in Bucks. We do not underestimate the scale of the task but it begins from a firm foundation”*
- (Chair of FACT Bucks)
- 1.9 The Vision, Principles, Aims and Objectives of the Strategy were signed off at the SEND Integrated Services Board on 16 July 2020. This Board is chaired by the Corporate Director of Children’s Services and provides governance for the SEND

Improvement work. It includes representatives from across the Local Authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

- 1.10 The aims and objectives of the strategy are centred on the 4 Preparation for Adulthood outcomes defined in the SEND Code of Practice, Jan 2015:

“With high aspirations, and the right support, the vast majority of children and young people can go on to achieve successful long-term outcomes in adult life. Local authorities, education providers and their partners should work together to help children and young people to realise their ambitions in relation to:

- *higher education and/or employment – including exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies*
- *independent living – enabling people to have choice and control over their lives and the support they receive, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living*
- *participating in society – including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community*
- *being as healthy as possible in adult life.*

- 1.11 Focusing on these 4 areas has enabled all aspects of support and provision for children and young people with SEND to be considered, with the collective goal of creating opportunities and improving outcomes.

- 1.12 The SEND Improvement Plan has been refreshed to ensure the aspirations of the Strategy are achieved. This has led to a more streamlined approach with a range of work streams based around the key priorities, and rigorous monitoring of progress. These work streams which focus on actions and impact are:

- SEN Support
- Sufficiency; Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Preparation for Adulthood
- Joint Commissioning
- Statutory Performance (SEND Operations)
- Quality Assurance, including co-production and child/parent voice
- Local Offer Advisory
- Voluntary and Community Sector

- 1.13 The work streams, known as Impact Groups, are multi-agency groups that are tasked with contributing to identified objectives within the Strategy, with collaboration and co-production as a core principle. The work of these groups is captured in the Local

Area SEND Improvement Plan. This was reviewed by the SEND Integrated Services Board on 19 October 2020 and the approach was approved.

- 1.14 The SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-23, and the SEND Improvement Plan can be found in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

3. Other options considered

3.1 Not applicable

4. Legal and financial implications

There are no additional legal or financial implications associated with introducing this strategy or improvement plan which are intended to be delivered within existing resources. Many partners are not purely focused on SEND and therefore the “ask” is additional to their Business as Usual which can create pressures i.e. schools and the voluntary and community sector. Capacity and resources to deliver are therefore limited, and may impact on the pace of the programme. Accessing external funding will be pursued as appropriate in partnership with our voluntary and community sector partners.

An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) has been completed and approved by Legal Services.

5. Corporate implications

There are no additional corporate implications associated with introducing this strategy or improvement plan.

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills has been briefed on an ongoing basis and is supportive of the recommendations in this report.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

Significant communications activity was completed to publicise the consultation to ensure all stakeholders had the opportunity to share their views. This included a dedicated web-page, direct mail outs to schools, and communications with parent/carers and providers via Fact Bucks and other Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) mailing lists. It was also promoted via social media and the Bucks Family Information Service. Events were held to directly discuss the proposed Strategy with interested parties.

In developing the Improvement Plan, key stakeholders from across a range of agencies including parent and VCS representatives, health, education settings, social care, transport and commissioning came together to agree actions and outcomes. This collaborative process enabled a comprehensive set of measures to be identified against which progress can be monitored.

8. Next steps and review

Following approval by Cabinet, the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and the SEND Improvement Plan will be published on the Council's website and the SEND Local Offer pages. It will also be circulated to key partners across Buckinghamshire who are involved in supporting children and young people with SEND.

The implementation of the Strategy will be monitored through the SEND Integrated Services Board who will receive quarterly highlight reports on progress against the improvement actions. The monthly SEND Improvement Group will monitor progress throughout the year and escalate issues as appropriate to ensure any barriers can be overcome quickly.

Achievements will be regularly shared on the SEND Local Offer, including actions taken in response to direct feedback from children and young people.

9. Background papers

Appendix 1 - SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-23

Appendix 2 - SEND Improvement Plan

Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk