

People Directorate Scrutiny Commission

July 2019



Report of: Director of Education and Skills

Title: SEND Strategy

Ward: All Wards

Officer Presenting Report: Alan Stubbersfield

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Recommendation:

Members are recommended to note the report and question officers as appropriate.

The significant issues in the report are:

- Clarity of strategic direction for Special Educational Needs
- Key themes of the strategy
- Process of production of the strategy
- How the strategy fits in with related documents

1. Summary

The local area has undertaken a process of self-evaluation which has resulted in the Bristol Local Area SEND Self-Evaluation (“SEF”). The SEF describes how effectively the local area identifies, assesses and meets the needs, and improves the outcomes of the different groups of children and young people with SEND.

The strategy has been developed through the Local Area Strategic SEND Partnership (“LASPAG”), using insight from the area’s self-assessment (“SEF”), ongoing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) SEND Spotlight Report and consultation with stakeholders. It describes the area’s vision, values and themes for development.

The SEND Strategy and SEF will be touchstones in the development and implementation of SEND Action Plan and will support stakeholders to hold LASPAG to account in accordance with the governance set out in the strategy document.

2. Background

Bristol Strategy for Children and Young People (0-25) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2019-2021

The Bristol Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities sets out our vision and values for children and young people with SEND and includes seven strategic themes. These themes express our key areas of work; they are:

- Outcomes
- Transparent, effective governance
- Early identification and response
- Participation and co-production
- Quality and improvement
- Joint commissioning and funding
- Statutory duties

The strategy is intentionally high level and does not give detail about the specifics of SEND improvement work in the area. The purpose of the strategy is to provide an overarching framework for a varied and variable package of improvement work covered in an action plan which must respond to changing service demands, and the outcome of a local area SEND inspection which is anticipated to take place soon.

The Local Area Strategic SEND Partnership Group and Consultation

LASPAG is responsible for the development of the SEND Action Plan which outlines the area’s SEND improvement work and sets out the steps which will be taken in order to deliver the themes set out in the strategy, and identify outcomes against which progress will be measured.

LASPAG will have reference to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment SEND Chapter, Self Assessment and SEND Strategy, and work with children and young people and their parents and carers in developing the SEND Action Plan. The Local Area Strategic SEND Partnership Group will report to the Health and Wellbeing Board on progress against this plan and benefit

from HWB's challenge and oversight, discharging its governance role in respect of special educational needs.

The local area's SEND function is currently under considerable pressure from the challenge of keeping pace with a changing demographic of children and young people with SEND for whom the area is responsible. This has resulted in underperformance in respect of statutory duties of assessment and review of children's needs and progress. Action planning is underway and recommendations to ameliorate these issues have been agreed by Cabinet.

The development of what is now the SEND Strategy began with a draft vision and a set of priorities developed with stakeholder input, in early 2018. This was consulted on from March 2018 through to May 2018. 86% of online survey respondents either 'Agreed' (26%) or 'Strongly Agreed' (62%) with the vision (158 people). The vision statement of the SEND Strategy is based upon this work, and suggested amendments.

Young people with SEND have engaged with strategic planning processes in a number of ways. This includes an event that brought the school councils in Special Schools together to discuss priorities; a Youth Voice conference where disabled children and young people and those with SEN introduced their priorities; and representation by The Listening Partnership for children and young people with SEND on the Bristol City Youth Council.

The views and priorities of children and young people with SEND are addressed either through the SEND Action Plan (e.g. Independent living, preparing for adulthood) or other relevant work overseen through the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (in relation to mental health and bullying for example), or Learning City (training as a route to employment).

As set out above, SEND Strategy is intended to be read as part of a set of key documents which describe the area's children and young people with SEND (JSNA SEND Spotlight Report); the area's services for children and young people with SEND (Self-Evaluation); and the area's approach to improving those services (SEND Action Plan).

3. Policy

The SEND strategy links to the council's One City Plan and other strategies supporting special educational needs and vulnerable groups

4. Consultation

a) Internal

As indicated in the report

b) External

As indicated in the report

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 5b) The development of the strategy document has reflected consultees' wishes, reducing social and educational segregation and giving better access to full curriculum opportunities.

Appendices:

SEND Strategy

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None