

TITLE OF REPORT: Consultation Response to Gateshead's draft Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy

REPORT OF: Val Hall, Service Director - Early Help, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform Cabinet about the responses to the consultation exercise on the draft SEND Strategy and to seek approval of the final strategy.

Background

2. Gateshead's draft Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy sets out the Council's vision for children and young people with SEND which is to:

'Give children the best start in life and to support them to achieve their best. The Council wants children and young people to develop their independence as far as practicable, to become confident, participating and contributing adults and to live fulfilled and productive lives.'

3. The strategy sets out the current context in relation to children and young people with SEND in Gateshead and the strategic aims and priorities the Council will work on through various SEND strategic planning and working groups. It will do this working in partnership with education, health and care commissioners, providers and service users.

Proposal

4. The Council consulted between 31 March and 28 April 2017 on the draft SEND strategy. The consultation responses and the draft SEND Strategy can be found in Appendix 1 and 2. No changes are proposed to be made to the strategy as a result of the consultation.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that
 - (i) Cabinet note the responses to the consultation exercise; and
 - (ii) Cabinet recommends Council to approve the SEND Strategy and the key areas for action outlined in it as set out in appendix 2, together with its publication.

For the following reasons:

- (i) The SEND Strategy provides leaders and practitioners working with children and young people with SEND with information that will enable them to better

understand the current context around children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and how the Council will work in partnership with key commissioning and delivery partners to meet those needs through the various strategic planning and working groups already in operation.

- (ii) To aid the Council in meeting its statutory responsibilities for children, young people with SEND and their families as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (0-25 years) and Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

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Policy Context

1. The Council has statutory duties set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice and part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to identify the needs of children and young people with SEND meet those needs and improve outcomes for them. The proposals in this report are consistent with statutory duties and with the vision for children and young people as set out in Vision 2030 and the Children Gateshead; the plan for children, young people and families.

Background

2. Gateshead's draft SEND Strategy provides insight into the immediate and longer term challenges that are currently faced and the practical steps that the Council is taking to address them. The statistical analysis presented in the Context section provides the rationale for some priorities. Other work streams are a response to issues identified by practitioners or emerging from the new SEND Code of Practice. Details of this work and the ways in which it supports the delivery of the Council's goals are provided in the Strategic Aims and Implementation sections of the strategy.

Consultation

3. Using the Council's online consultation portal, the Council consulted between 31 March and 28 April 2017 on the draft SEND Strategy.
4. 20 people responded to the online consultation.
 - Of the 20 respondents, 19 (95%) strongly agreed or tended to agree with the strategic aims that were identified in the strategy. 1 person (5%) strongly disagreed.
 - Of the 20 respondents, 19 (95%) strongly agreed or tended to agree that we are focusing on the right areas for action. 1 person (5%) strongly disagreed.

Additional comments received via the online consultation are set out in the table below:

Response
Class sizes are an issue. Supply teachers are covering for staff and quite often are just giving classes basic needs as the subject covering is not there fields.my child often comes home complaining about supply teacher not having a clue about the lesson there teaching as they have been given a draft copy or repeated work already done previously.
Every family is different but also introducing changes needs to happen now and help for the long term future i.e. travel training costs of services, introducing help for families before anything happens. Teach schools, carers, foster parents how to deal with changes and how it affects them link services and help services to grow and to COMMUNICATE with other services in the council also consider workloads for social workers and their restrictions that's why the council have a high turnover of social

workers consider all of the above.

SEN should be assessed on an individual basis, support should be provided to suit needs not resources, and in order to help with this disabilities and support provided to support disabled children in education should not be categorised to the point that a child who had one specific need is excluded from support as their main need is not categorised in the support bracket. Some children may have physical impairment, visual impairment and autistic traits they do not necessarily fit into one type of support group. This needs to be considered when providing training and resources for children with SEN. In addition to out of school provision as this should for part of the whole education provision.

The strategy specifically mentions Looked After Children but does not mention those who have moved from being Looked After to being Adopted. The extra needs do not disappear once an adoption order is in place and many adopters find that they feel cut adrift from support services for their children.

This looks good on paper but how will this be implemented with school budgets being cut and stretched. I have experience both personally and professionally of the SEN system and it is getting worse.

5. There is no proposal to amend the strategy based on responses received via the consultation exercise. The comments received will be picked up and acted upon through the work of the SEND Strategy Group.
6. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People have been consulted.

Alternative Options

7. Cabinet could decide to not approve the SEND Strategy; however, this would result in a delay to the priorities outlined in the strategy being actioned.

Implications of Recommended Option

8. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director Corporate Resources confirms there are no specific financial implications.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no specific HR implications.
 - c) **Property Implications** - None
9. **Risk Management Implication** - None
10. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - No specific Equality and Diversity implications.
11. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – None

- 12. **Health Implications** - None
- 13. **Sustainability Implications** - None
- 14. **Human Rights Implications** - None
- 15. **Area and Ward Implications** - None