

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 17 February 2021

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2021-26



Cllr Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND) said,

“We want all children with special educational needs and disabilities to be able to reach their potential by receiving the right support at the right time in their own communities, at their local school or place of education.

We have worked hard to meet increased demand and part of that development process has been to work closely with partners, professionals and parents to find the best way forward.

This strategy lays down the principles upon which our work will be based, particularly using the funding available to have pupils educated more inclusively closer to home, while multiple groups work together better for each child’s benefit.”

Report Summary:

Staffordshire County Council and partners have been co-producing a new strategy to support the inclusion of all children and young people, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This Strategy builds on the outcomes of the 2018 Ofsted/CQC Local Area SEND Inspection and the Written Statement of Action.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes the update to the SEND Strategy in light of the responses received during the consultation period; and
- b. Approves the Staffordshire SEND Strategy as the core vision and key priority areas that the County Council, along with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and partners (including education and health providers) will use to drive our ambition for improving provision for our children and young people.

Local Members Interest
N/A

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Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2021-26

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)

I recommend that:

- a. Notes the update to the SEND Strategy in light of the responses received during the consultation period; and
- b. Approves the Staffordshire SEND Strategy as the core vision and key priority areas that the County Council, along with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and partners (including education and health providers) will use to drive our ambition for improving provision for our children and young people.

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. Staffordshire County Council and partners have been co-producing a new strategy to support the inclusion of all children and young people, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This Strategy builds on the outcomes of the 2018 Ofsted/CQC Local Area SEND Inspection and the Written Statement of Action.
2. The SEND strategy for Staffordshire 2021-2026 has been co-produced with key stakeholders including health and education representatives, parents and carers. The draft strategy has been the subject of public consultation, which took place between November 2020 and January 2021, to seek feedback on the proposed vision, priorities and activities by which the Council will shape its work and decisions in relation to SEND over the next five years, and to inform the development of the new strategy.
3. The SEND strategy 2021-2026 (Appendix 1) sets out how the County Council with strategic partners will support the inclusion of all children and young people, with a focus on those with SEND.
4. The strategy has been developed over the last 8 months through a series of pre-consultation activities with partners including parents and carers. Throughout June and July 2020, over 370 people completed the SEND Survey. Our Facebook Live 'SEND Strategy Discussion' event that ran in August 2020 with the Staffordshire Voice Project had over 8,400 views and had 200 comments.

5. Through the consultation period 5,063 parents and carers were emailed directly, the information was shared with education providers and the consultation was advertised on social media to reach a wide audience.
6. The ambition of the strategy is that all children and young people with SEND in Staffordshire are given the opportunity to reach their full potential, that they are able to engage with the right support at the right time from their family, the community and the professionals who work with them to ensure that this happens. Parents and professionals have also shared experiences and comments from the children and young people they are supporting.
7. As part of our pre-consultation activities and formal consultation period, the strategy has been co-produced with parents and carers, as well as education providers and professionals from social care, health and education, to ensure it complements other County Council and key stakeholder strategies.
8. Within the strategy, four priorities have been identified:
 - a. Services communicate well with each other and families regularly and in a timely manner.
 - b. Education settings, health and social care services work in partnership with families and other support providers to meet needs of children and young people
 - c. The right support is made available for children and young people with SEND and their families at the right time
 - d. Communities are inclusive: There is greater awareness in the community of SEND resulting in improved access to out of school activities for families with SEND.
9. The strategy is a high-level document with the implementation plan, linked to the activities set out within the local area written statement of action, now being finalised.
10. The responses received as part of the consultation identified that there is a high level of support for the vision and priorities, but this is tempered by a lack of belief that there will be the funding, resources and commitment for delivery, based on the current provision.
11. As stated within the Cabinet report on 18 November 2020 within the [Children and Families System Transformation](#) update, the aspiration for the SEND and Inclusion part of the children's system is to improve the outcomes for Staffordshire's children and their families. We aspire to an inclusive system underpinned by restorative practice and integrated into a District Footprint.
12. To achieve the best outcomes for children and make better use of the funding available, the aspirational model of the partnership will create an inclusive system where there are more children with SEND receiving SEND support in mainstream schools. Special schools will provide outreach support to mainstream schools that will allow mainstream schools to provide high quality support to children identified with SEND needs

13. The roll out of the SEND locality hub model is providing the mechanism to identify and support children experiencing difficulties early, reducing the need for EHCPs. These are supporting mainstream schools to provide a graduated response to additional needs.
14. As part of the strategy, a plan for specialist provision is being developed. This is because available places in our state funded specialist provision are limited due to numbers already on roll. The number of children with SEND educated in independent non maintained special schools continues to increase. The plan will consider the creation of additional enhanced provision in mainstream schools. Through doing this it will be possible to educate more children locally and reduce the costs associated with educating children out of county in the independent non-maintained sector. There will also be a potential reduction in transport costs by placing children more locally.
15. The draft SEND strategy was presented to the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee on 12 November 2020. Following amendments as a result of consultation responses received, the final strategy was presented to a working group of representatives of the 3 Staffordshire select committees on 26 January 2021 where the strategy was welcomed and supported.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – SEND Strategy

Contact Details

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