

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Rory Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NUMBER:

24/00072

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

- Yes - It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Education Accessibility Strategy

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills I agree to:

- APPROVE the adoption and implementation of the Education Accessibility Strategy 2025-28
- Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children's, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, to refresh and/or make revisions to the strategy where changes do not require additional governance.
- Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children's, Young People and Education to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, entering into and finalising the terms of relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the above decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Education Accessibility Strategy 2025-28 is written to support the delivery of a number of strategies including:

- The Education Strategy,
- The delivery of Kent's SEND Strategy, and
- Our Countywide Approach To Inclusive Education (CATIE).
- the Commissioning Plan for Education provision in Kent 2023-27.

The documents were consulted on in the Autumn of 2024. The responses received have been considered in making this decision.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 places a duty on local authorities to prepare a written accessibility strategy and a duty on responsible bodies of schools (i.e. governing bodies and trusts) to prepare a written accessibility plan. It also places a duty on local authorities/governing bodies to plan to increase the accessibility of their schools. KCC does not have a current Education Accessibility Strategy which this addresses.

This strategy sets out how the local authority and its maintained schools (community, voluntary controlled and foundation schools) currently ensure education is accessible for pupils with SEND, and what steps will be taken to further improve accessibility.

The County Council provides capital funding, the Schools Access Initiative (SAI), to enable KCC

maintained mainstream schools, for which it has capital responsibility (community, voluntary controlled and foundation school), become more accessible for school aged disabled children. It supports the implementation of the Education Accessibility Strategy.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The views of the Children’s, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee Members will added following the meeting.

The documents were consulted on in the 23 September to 11 November 2024. Fifteen responses were received.-eight responses were from parents/ carers or family members, the remainder from professionals. Eight respondents had children with SEN, of which five had an Educational Health and Care Plan.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The option of not having an Education Accessibility Strategy was dismissed, as this is a legal requirement. This carries the risk of legal challenge.

Incorporating this within the SEND strategy was dismissed to ensure both strategies remained focused and concise.

Comments from the consultation were reviewed but no adaptations were deemed necessary.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date