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To: Education Cabinet Committee – 9 May 2012

Subject: Scoping a Review and the Development of a Strategy for Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Classification: Unrestricted

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Summary: This report scopes the issues and next steps that will inform a comprehensive review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Kent. The aim is to develop a SEND Strategy for the children and young people of Kent that articulates clear priorities for improvement, based on an analysis of existing and future needs and provision, having regard to local and national challenges and drivers for change.

Recommendations: (i) That Members note the issues identified in the Scoping Paper attached to this Report and endorse the framework for the review and the development of a Special Education Needs and Disabilities Strategy for the children and young people of Kent:

(ii) That the outcomes of the review and a draft SEND Strategy will be brought back to this Committee for its further consideration in due course.

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## 1. Introduction

1. (1) Following the cessation of the SEN Lead School Programme, Members agreed in September 2010 to conduct a comprehensive review of SEN policy and provision. Preliminary work has been undertaken and is detailed in the attached Scoping Paper.

(2) Through the process of developing and implementing the SEN Lead School Programme, a number of improvement issues were identified that needed to be addressed. Members therefore agreed to a comprehensive review and the development of an SEN Strategy to describe and provide a continuum of provision to meet the needs of all children and young people with SEND.

## 2. Financial Implications

2. (1) There are no immediate financial implications arising from the proposal to have a review and further development of the SEND Strategy.

(2) However nearly 20% (£187m), of the Schools Dedicated School's Grant (DSG), is invested in schools to meet additional and special educational needs of pupils in Kent. There is a lack of clarity and shared understanding across the LA at all

levels, about the approach to resourcing SEND. This is a significant amount of money which this strategic review will ensure is spent in a more appropriate and effective way to secure better outcomes. Resources and provision need to be effectively targeted to maximise best value improvements; historically the resources for SEN support have not been allocated and managed to secure optimum benefit. Therefore the current funding arrangements for SEN necessitate a reorganisation of resources which will form part of the Strategy.

### **3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework**

3. (1) The development of a SEND Strategy supports the delivery of Bold Steps for Kent Strategic Priorities 3 - *Ensure all pupils meet their full potential* and priority 15 - *Improve services for the most vulnerable in Kent*.

(2) KCC's Education, Learning and Skills Vision and priorities for improvement document details targets and priorities for schools and the LA to achieve by 2015. The targets detailed below will be met, in part by developing a SEND strategy to provide higher quality, local and more cost effective provision that improves outcomes for children and young people with SEND:

- pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in Kent will achieve better progress and outcomes than nationally
- All special schools will be good or outstanding
- The number of pupils requiring a statement of SEN will be reduced by developing more effective early intervention
- 95% of SEN statutory assessments will be completed within required timescales
- The number of independent and non maintained special school placements will be reduced by 10% to ensure the needs of more Kent children are met in their locality

### **4. Strategic Context**

4. (1) Any SEND Strategy cannot sit in isolation from other significant changes that are underway:

- ◆ Next steps for reform of SEND, following the consultation on the Green Paper last year (Government announcement expected shortly)
- ◆ Proposed changes to school funding and high needs pupils
- ◆ The raising of the participation age to 18 by 2015
- ◆ The role of schools and KCC in commissioning services
- ◆ The changes to the health service, particularly the move to neighbourhood commissioning by GP consortia and the Care Quality Commission review of health services for disabled children

(2) The strategy will also consider the proposed national changes to future funding of SEN, the work of the South East 7 SEN Pathfinder, the new guidance on Learning Difficulty Assessments for young people aged 16-25, increasing levels of delegation and devolution to schools, new ways of working including integrated local assessment and decision making and the ambitions of Bold Steps for Education as they affect children and young people with SEND.

### **5. Why are we having a Review?**

5. (1) The SEND Strategy is a key element of Kent County Council's (KCC) policy framework for supporting the needs of all children and young people between the ages of 0-25. The Local Authority (LA) has a statutory duty to keep under review its arrangements for special education provision.

(2) The attached Scoping Paper sets out the issues in paragraphs 9 and 10 that the strategic review will address. From our early analysis we know that:

- ◆ Children with SEND have poorer outcomes and life chances. Young people with SEND are less likely to stay in full time education after age 16 and are more likely not to be in education, training or employment than their non-SEND peers
- ◆ There is a significant gap in educational performance locally and nationally between children and young people with SEND compared to non SEND children and young people
- ◆ Day to day support to help children and young people with SEND varies hugely in schools. This is partly as a consequence of ineffective targeting of resources, partly to do with the need for more consistent high quality classroom practice and partly due to the lack of integration and joint commissioning across education, health and social care to support SEND children and young people
- ◆ In general terms parental satisfaction with services is lower for parents with children with SEND when compared to the whole parent cohort

(3) Whilst much is being done already to improve provision and the experience for children and young people with SEND, it will be difficult to achieve improvements in this period of financial challenge, without reforming our approach to secure higher quality, more cost-effective provision that improves outcomes and narrows the gap for children and young people with SEND

## **6. What we want to achieve?**

6. (1) The aim of the strategic review is fourfold:

- ◆ To address issues identified by stakeholders which impede the achievement of excellent outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- ◆ To determine priorities for improvements
- ◆ To ensure that the education, health and social care needs of SEND children and young people are improved through integrated working
- ◆ To more effectively target SEN resources to secure value for money

(2) It is widely acknowledged that the SEN framework is too complex and bureaucratic and needs to be simplified in order to:

- ◆ Provide earlier support ;
- ◆ Provide a more intensive focus on progress and outcomes;
- ◆ Ensure that parents get better information to make informed choices about their child;
- ◆ Deliver a more holistic integrated service for children and young people with SEND;
- ◆ Ensure school staff receive better training and development in recognising SEN and developing more effective teaching approaches;
- ◆ Ensure planning for transition to adulthood starts earlier and has a stronger focus on pathways to employment/supported living.

(3) In conjunction with the Kent Association of Headteachers (KAH) and Kent Association of Special Schools (KASS), work has already commenced on analysing the challenges for SEND in Kent and the attached Scoping Paper provides information on the quality of existing provision, trends and performance. The paper

also identifies many of the issues that the strategic review will need to resolve when looking at options for improvement.

## 7. Priority Work Strands

7. (1) A SEN Strategy Group has been established to carry out the review and develop a draft strategy for implementation. The strategy will be supported with proposals for action. The Strategy Group comprises Headteachers, Senior Officers, practitioner representatives and other key stakeholders representing parents.

(2) The Strategy Group identified the following priority work strands to analyse issues including reviewing current provision and future needs, providing a rationale for change and setting out proposals for action that secure improvements:

- I. Increase parental/carer engagement and confidence building
- II. Review capacity of special schools (defining existing offer and building in future need and development)
- III. Develop and identify better resourced specialist provision in mainstream schools
- IV. Develop and plan post 16 provision and services
- V. Review funding streams/mechanisms (delegated and non delegated)
- VI. Review statutory assessment criteria and streamlining processes
- VII. Build capacity in mainstream schools
- VIII. Improve integrated working and joint commissioning arrangements
- IX. Review the process and operation of local forums and panels
- X. Define and rationalise local decision making arrangements

(3) Work strand leads will be identified in May 2012 to take forward the key work strand priorities.

## 8. Timescale for Completion

8. (1) A series of steps will be undertaken to develop and implement the strategy:

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>By when</b>
Education Cabinet Committee endorse Scoping Paper	9 May 2012
Scoping Paper shared with Schools	May 2012
Priority Work Strand Leads draft priority review papers	Completed 31 August 2012
SEN Strategy Group consider priority review papers	4 September 2012
Draft Strategy circulated for consultation	October/November 2012
Consultation feedback analysed and strategy refined	December 2012
Final draft Strategy approval sought from KAH/KASS	January 2013
Consideration and approval of draft strategy secured from Members	February 2013
Publication of final Strategy and Action Plan	March 2013
Leads develop individual Work Strand Action Plans	March –August 2013
SEND Strategy Action Plan implemented and delivered	September 2013
Accountability and performance framework arrangements initiated	September 2013

## 9. Recommendations

.Member are asked to note

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- (i) the issues identified in the Scoping Paper attached to this Report and endorse the framework for the review and the development of a Special Education Needs and Disabilities Strategy for the children and young people of Kent:
- (ii) that the outcomes of the review and a draft SEND Strategy will be brought back to this Committee for its further consideration in due course.

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### **Background Documents**

KCC Cabinet Paper entitled Review of SEN Units, 13 December 2010

KCC Bold Steps for Kent-Medium term Plan to 2014-2015