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To: Education Cabinet Committee – 21 June 2013

Subject: Decision number: 13/00033 - Consultation Report on the draft Strategy for Special Education Needs and Disabilities

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet – 15 July 2013

Electoral Division: All

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Summary: This report provides Education Cabinet Committee Members with a summary of the consultation responses received on the proposed Strategy for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Kent. Respondents overwhelmingly supported the aims, priorities and proposals.

Recommendations: That Members

- (i) note responses received during the stakeholder consultation
- (ii) note and comment on the amended Strategy for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) attached to this Report
- (iii) note that the outcomes of the Committee's discussion, the amended Strategy and consultation responses will be presented to Cabinet in July 2013 for final approval.

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. Following a decision in May 2012 by Education Cabinet Committee to endorse the framework for a review and development of a Kent SEND Strategy for children and young people, 10 key priorities were agreed:

1. Review and develop the capacity of special schools (defining existing offer and building in future need and development)
2. Develop and identify better resourced specialist provision in mainstream schools
3. Develop and improve post 16 provision and services
4. Review funding streams/mechanisms to achieve better value for money (delegated and non delegated)
5. Increase parental/carer engagement and confidence in the system
6. Review and improve the statutory assessment process and the timescales for completing assessments
7. Build professional capacity and skills in mainstream schools to meet the changing needs of pupils

8. Improve integrated working and joint commissioning arrangements between education, health and social care
9. Review the process and operation of local forums and panels to ensure children's needs are met more effectively
10. Define and rationalise local decision making arrangements

1.2 The draft SEND Strategy (appendix 3) identifies key priorities to improve provision and close the attainment gap for disabled children and those with special educational needs (SEN). It also enables Kent to implement statutory changes proposed in the Children and Families Bill which we believe will be enacted from September 2014 and changes to national funding arrangements which came into force in April 2013. The strategy is designed to:

- Improve access to local education, care and health provision by developing the quality and capacity of early years providers, schools and colleges to meet the needs of local children with SEN and disability;
- Improve progress rates and have good outcomes for all children and young people with SEN and disabilities so that we close the gap between those with SEN and those without, and set aspirational targets for all children in Kent;
- Build parents' confidence in the support provided and improve the engagement of parents by providing timely information, advice and support for parents;
- Develop and improve services for children and young people with them and their families, through co-production and meaningful participation.
- Deliver greater local integration and co-ordination in services for children and families in Kent, across education, health and social care;
- Improve early intervention and ensure preventative support is more targeted to reduce poorer outcomes and prevent escalation and rising levels of need;
- Develop a more systematic and joint strategic commissioning approach to improve the quality and availability of provision from birth to age 25, with good transition to adult services;
- Ensure the provision of high quality specialist services as appropriate and necessary;
- Ensure we are making the most effective and efficient use of our resources to meet increasing demand (such as removing perverse incentives);
- Successfully deliver the Kent approach to integrated education, health and care planning by September 2014.
- Ensure disabled children and families have timely access to appropriate community equipment and wheelchair services to meet their current and future needs.

1.3 Nearly 20% (£187m) of the Dedicated School's Grant (DSG) is invested in schools to meet the additional and special educational needs of pupils in Kent. The proposals in the Strategy will ensure resources, including those delegated to schools are spent in a more appropriate and effective way to secure better outcomes. It will be necessary to prepare a fully costed delivery plan to implement the Strategy.

## **2. Consultation process**

2.1 In March 2013, the Education Cabinet Committee discussed the proposed Strategy and endorsed plans for stakeholder consultation. The draft Strategy was amended in the light of comments by Committee members and

consultation ran from 27 March to 3 June 2013. Key stakeholders (listed at appendix 1) were identified and invited to comment.

- 2.2 The full draft strategy document and an executive summary were published for consultation on the Council's website on 27 March 2013. The online format invited respondents to submit an e-response form or to send submissions to a specifically established email address. To raise general awareness of the consultation, advertisements were placed in the local press on two dates during the consultation period and flyers were sent to Special schools for distribution to their pupils and their families. E-bulletins to schools were used to alert and remind schools prior to the closing date. Further versions including a young persons' version were available as download and alternative formats were available although not requested.
- 2.3 The Corporate Director held two consultation events to discuss the draft strategy with Headteachers (7 and 20 May 2013) at which Headteacher representatives from Kent Special Schools gave presentations on the joint working that underpinned the draft strategy.
- 2.4 Consultation discussions also took place at meetings of the Tonbridge and Malling Local Children's Trust Board, the Kent Association of Special School Headteachers, District Briefings for SEN Co-ordinators and a meeting for Thanet Schools engaged in the SEN Pathfinder. By invitation, consultation also took place at a conference for parents and carers hosted by Kent Parents as Equal Partners (KPEPS).

### **3. Respondents**

- 3.1 Views were received from 93 respondents representing 72 organisations and 21 individuals. Details of all 93 responses are given at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 54 respondents completed the e-form:
- |    |  |       |
|----|--|-------|
| Q1 | Are you a parent or guardian                     | 16.7% |
|    | Responding on behalf of a school or organisation | 61.1% |
|    | Other  | 22.2% |
- Their responses to questions are set out at para 4.3 of this report.
- 3.3 Headteachers from 51 Kent Schools gave their views at two specific consultation events for Kent schools

### **4. Consultation responses**

- 4.1 All respondents overwhelmingly supported the proposals in the draft strategy. Three themes emerged in the comments made by respondents:
- 'How' will the strategy be implemented, particularly in relation to joint commissioning and integrating services
  - Ensuring an adequate level of funding for changes
  - Training
- 4.2 Responses from Headteachers at consultation events for schools, gave significant support for the vision, aims and priorities. Their comments can be summarised as
- Joint working; how will schools access health and social care provision; how will all agencies support locality-based early intervention

- Access to training
- Engaging all schools; accountability
- Providing support for early years providers
- Reducing bureaucracy
- Personalised budgets

4.3 Analysis of e-form responses are set out below

**Q2 Do you agree, or disagree with the key aims?  
Agree 94.4%, Disagree 3.7%, Don't know 1.9%.**

The comments included:

- Heartening to see the gaps so comprehensively highlighted
- Sounds lovely, but will there be real change?
- Cannot be delivered without funding
- Services must be personalised and joined up. Professionals need up to date knowledge of each others' practices
- How will expanded Special schools be able to support those who need a small environment for their behaviour and emotional needs?
- The FE sector is well placed to expand its vocational skills provision
- The aims do not sufficiently consider adults coming out of education into early adulthood

**Q3 Do you agree, or disagree with the priorities?  
Agree 92.6%, Disagree 3.7%, Don't know 3.7%**

The comments included:

- Training
- Will require co-operation of all accountable partners
- Reduce delays: assessments, NHS, CAMHS, in Canterbury/Ashford
- Maintain existing specialist short break opportunities
- Children with behavioural difficulties being excluded is a concern
- Schools cannot specialise in multiple areas e.g. physical disability and ASD
- A busy vibrant classroom of 30 is not right for an ASD child
- Should include emotional support for progressive conditions
- Should reflect self advocacy and moving into adulthood, away from parental advocacy
- A broad range of providers shouldn't be a priority

**Q4 Do you agree, or disagree with the success targets?  
Agree 77.8%, Disagree 9.3%, Don't know 13%**

The comments included:

- 'Tell us once' is a fantastic aim. Can it be fulfilled?
- Some timescales seem unrealistic or unachievable
- Will there be sufficient funding to meet the cost?
- Reduce assessments through earlier intervention, not reducing support
- A narrow understanding of success could marginalise children with SEN  
Special schools need adequate buildings and facilities. Not enough Special provision in Tunbridge Wells
- More vulnerable young people at Level 1 should be offered apprenticeships

- Ensure each person has links with adult services.

**Q5 Do you agree, or disagree that more services for disabled children should be integrated?**

**Agree 87%, Disagree 5.6%, Don't know 7.4%**

The comments included:

- We agree but we are sceptical about whether they are achievable
- There should be an easy way to find out what services are available and how to access them, referral routes need to be clear and simple
- Criteria are not consistent across agencies/where you can get help if you don't meet the criteria
- My life (parent of child with ASD) would be easier if I could authorise information sharing between agencies
- Some families do not want to engage with all agencies
- Will services share management and accommodation?

**Q6 If you are a parent/carer, do you think this Strategy is proposing to do the right things for your child and your family?**

**Agree 65%, Disagree 0%, Don't know 35%**

The comments included:

- If the intention is to create further new resource places at other mainstream schools then I am supportive of that move. If the proposal is to increase the number of spaces at existing SEN resource bases then I believe this would be detrimental to the children already within those bases.
- It 'feels' that the emphasis is only on ASD or post 16 yrs
- More choice is a positive thing, but it still won't give freedom to out of county.
- Prioritise budgets and placements for looked after children

**Q7 Do you agree, or disagree with our approach to developing more local provision on a continuous basis from 0-24 years?**

**Agree 94.4%, Disagree 1.9%, Don't know 3.7%**

The comments included:

- Sooner the better.
- Provided it is properly funded.
- Resource and skills implications for the extension of services to young people in further education e.g. access to Educational Psychology
- Increased access to education and training could make a huge long term difference
- Particularly transition from Children Services to Adult Services.
- Young people should be able to choose to live and work locally
- Better continuity when children move area and district

4.4 Respondents were invited to suggest any important areas which were not in the draft strategy. The comments received included the following:

- Resources which are working well shouldn't be changed

- Recognise the role of Education Psychology, where there is existing expertise in mainstream, how sensory impairment expertise in units can support outreach
  - Signpost where parents can access advice and staff with expertise, and school based support groups. Every school should have a Family Liaison Officer
  - How will schools, early years providers and FE colleges access funding and training
  - How will early intervention be resourced? It saves money in the long run. It can't be funded from existing resources.
  - Allow teaching assistants to move 'up' with child they support.
  - The strategy doesn't mention children who are academically gifted with physical disabilities, provision for ADHD, or children who don't meet the criteria for an integrated EHC Plan.
  - Services to support transition
  - Engagement with the London Boroughs in relation to Children in Care. It may be necessary to have more provision in East Kent because of the economic and social demographics
  - Adopt a system-wide social pedagogical approach (a conceptual model, not an evidence-based programme)
  - Improve availability of NHS therapies for students in FE Colleges
  - More investment in a range of work related options
  - It needs an outcomes target for the 19-25 age group e.g a NEET figure
  - Reflection or understanding of the rights an individual has at 18 and an adult
- 4.5 Two responses from the NHS (Kent & Medway Commissioning Support Unit and the Canterbury Coastal CCG) supported the content of the SEND strategy, but stated that they did not support or agree with the format in which the strategy has been written, believing that it needs to be presented in the format of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

## **5 Equality Analysis**

- 5.1 The key purpose of the Strategy is to support children who have been identified because they are vulnerable. Almost all of them will fall within the Equality Act definition of disability. It is anticipated that the Strategy will have a positive impact on these children and their families. It has not been possible to use consultation responses to inform equalities analysis due to 77.4% of online responses having been completed on behalf of organisations.

## **6. Corporate Director's comments**

- 6.1 We are pleased with the overwhelming support for the vision and strategy. We can be confident that respondents believe our aims are the right ones and they want us to put action in place. It is reassuring to note from the responses received on behalf of parents and carers that there is strong parental support for local solutions, particularly for increasing the number of specialist places and that they agree the proposals are focussing on the right outcomes for their children.
- 6.2 Some respondents pointed to the critical importance of agencies working together. We are reassured by the commitment within the draft Children &

Families Bill to joint commissioning, and heartened by the March 2013 amendment to the draft bill which further strengthens the role of the NHS in delivering the provision specified in plans.

- 6.3 Respondents acknowledged that this is an ambitious strategy that will call for greater integration of services, particularly with health and with adult services. Transition needs to be a good experience for every young person. We want them to be talking to the right people in the right places at the right time. The consultation has highlighted successful transition support in practice between Grange Park Special school and the local FE College and the adult ASD service which could become involved at an earlier point in the lives of young people.
- 6.4 The delivery of the strategy will require a co-ordinated programme of professional development for schools, early years settings and FE partners. Many respondents asked for reassurance that training is a county priority and we are pleased to reassure them that our strategic plans will be delivered locally to ensure schools can access support. Some individual responses asked the authority to ensure that some individual schools would not be overburdened by playing a leading and supporting role for others. We recognise the importance of providing good training for all schools and Early Years and FE sector partners and we are using Service Level Agreements to clarify the role of Special schools providing outreach support for others.
- 6.5 Not all of the Strategy proposals will require funding. Many are reliant on changing culture and attitude, new ways of working and using resources differently. Where there are resource implications we will aim to use our existing resources differently and maximise the opportunities that come from joint working. We will identify where further investment is needed to overcome any deep-rooted barriers.
- 6.6 We remain committed to partnership with parents. Involving them in developing an integrated approach to assessment will mean that there is a robust discussion about what works and where we can achieve the best outcomes for Kent's children and young people.
- 6.7 Many respondents highlighted that the next steps for the strategy will be to set out the detailed of 'how' we will put the right actions in place and we will produce and publish our detailed, costed delivery plan early in the autumn.

## **7. Recommendations**

Members are asked to

- (i) note the responses received during the stakeholder consultation
- (ii) note and comment on the amended Strategy for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) attached to this Report
- (iii) note that the outcomes of the Committee's discussion, the amended Strategy and consultation responses will be presented to Cabinet in July 2013 for final approval.

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**Background Documents**

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

KCC Scoping Review and the Development of a Strategy for Special Education Needs and Disabilities, 9 May 2012

**Key stakeholders invited to comment**

All Schools via E- bulletin sent 26 March and resent in May  
All Headteachers  
Kent Assoc. Special Schools  
All SEN Co-ordinators via SENCO meetings (23/4 Shepway, Thanet 24/4 Canterbury, Maidstone, 25/4 Tonbridge & Malling, 30/4 Swale, Tun Wells, 1/5 Ashford, Dartford, 2/5 Sevenoaks, 7/5 Dover, 8/5 Gravesham  
Kent Parents as Equal Partners  
Parent Partnership Service  
All parents of children with SEN via school SENCOs  
Pupils via School Councils  
All PRUs /Alternative Curriculum providers  
Kent Governors Association & SEN Governors via e-bulletin  
Kent Association of FE Colleges  
Early Years SEN Co-ordinators (Dartford 08/05, Tunbridge Wells/Sevenoaks 16/05, Maidstone 8/5, Tonbridge & Malling 9/5, Ashford 13/5, Dover 24/4, Thanet 15/5, Canterbury 23/4  
Portage  
Children's Centres  
Childminders  
Out of School childcare providers  
Children's Trust Board  
Joint Commissioning Board  
Virtual School Kent  
Social care provider forums including Early Intervention Forum  
Youth service, Youth Parliament  
Clinical Commissioning Groups  
School Nursing  
Community Paediatricians  
Wheelchair Service  
Early Support Key workers  
Therapy Services  
Short break services  
Community Children's Nursing Services  
SE7 Heads of SEN  
Bexley Council, Bromley Council, Medway Council: Heads of SEN  
All Elected Members  
Kent Members of Parliament  
District Councils  
Children & Families  
ELS staff via Directors,  
Heads of Services,  
SEN Area staff teams,  
Education Psychology,  
Specialist Teaching & Learning Service District Co-ordinators

## Consultation respondents

### 51 Schools (of whom 33 submitted e-forms):

Aldington Primary School  
Barham  
Barton Junior School  
Broomhill Bank Special School  
Chilham CEP  
Clementina Free School  
Dartford Bridge Primary School  
Eastry Church of England Primary  
East Stour Primary  
Foreland Special School  
Garlinge Primary School and Nursery  
Greenfield Community Primary  
Harrietsham CEP School  
Hollingbourne Primary School  
Holy Family  
Ifield School  
Kings Farm Primary School  
Leigh Primary School  
Longfield Academy  
Madginford Park Infant School  
Malling/Homesdale Federation  
Mayfield Grammar School  
McGinty Speech & Language Centre  
Milestone Academy  
Molehill Copse Academy  
NLL Academy  
Nonington Church of England Primary School  
Park Way Primary School  
Playbox Day Nursery , Folkestone, Kent  
River Primary School Dover  
Rosherville Primary  
Sandling Primary School  
Shatterlock Infants  
Shoreham Village School  
St Augustine's Academy  
St Ethelberts, Ramsgate  
St Francis Catholic Primary School  
St Gregory's catholic school  
St Martin's Dover  
St Simon Stock Catholic School, Maidstone  
St Stephen's Primary School, Tonbridge  
St. Nicholas Special School  
Swadelands School  
Swale Academy Trust  
The North School  
Valence School, Westerham  
Westcourt Primary & Nursery School  
Westlands Primary School  
Whitfield Aspen and Dover Christ Church Academy  
Woodlands Junior School  
Wrotham School

## **6 Governor representatives from Kent Schools**

- Brook Community School,
- Foreland Special School
- Four Elms Primary,
- Harcourt Primary School,
- Holywell Primary,
- Wentworth Primary,

## **6 Other representing organisations**

- KAFEC Colleges
- Kent PEPS
- M4S
- County Sensory Services (part of Specialist Teaching Service)
- STLS
- Playbox Day Nursery, Folkestone

## **5 Health respondents**

- Ashford Clinical Commissioning Group,
- Canterbury and Coastal Clinical Commissioning Group,
- Consultant Community Paediatrician at Darent Valley Hospital,
- East Kent Hospitals: Paediatric Physiotherapy, Occupational & Speech and Language Therapies,
- Kent & Medway NHS Commissioning Support unit

## **4 Social Care respondents**

- Learning Disability Services (FSC)
- Specialist Children's Service,
- Transition worker
- VSK; Virtual School Kent

## **21 Individual responses**

9 x Parent/guardian who completed eforms

4 x Educational Psychologists

3 x Local Government Officers

5 x Teachers