

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**24 JUNE 2021**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**CABINET DECISION**

**Children and Young People – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Lisa Evans**

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGY 2021-23**

**SUMMARY**

This report presents the Stockton-on-Tees Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategy for children and young people aged 0-25 and their families.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)/DECISION(S)**

The SEND strategy supports the key priority of making the Borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm. It is specifically focused on the priority to:

Help schools to improve pupil wellbeing, reduce exclusions, improve careers advice and to continue the drive to improve educational attainment for all pupils, including those with additional needs, recognising the disruption caused by COVID-19 and the 'catch up' support required

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Strategy and its six key priorities.
2. Note that an accompanying action plan will be developed to ensure accountability for key partnership actions and continuous improvement.

**DETAIL**

1. The Stockton-on-Tees SEND strategy 2021-23 (included as **Appendix One**) has been developed jointly by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group and parents/carers of children and young people with SEND represented by the Stockton Parent Carer Forum.
2. The strategy outlines the local area's commitment to driving developments across our system and the services within it so that collectively we support children and young people with SEND to achieve the best possible outcomes and to become successful and happy adults.
3. It is the culmination of the transformation and improvement journey so far, building upon the learning from the local area inspection in 2019, and brings together our previous strategic implementation plan and action plans into a single, shared and long-term vision.
4. The strategy is informed by the self-evaluation, the SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health Needs Assessment, and ongoing consultation, engagement and coproduction work with the families of children and young people with SEND.

5. It was endorsed by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 19 May.
6. The strategy sets out a shared vision for children and young people with SEND that is the same as for all children and young people: that Stockton-on-Tees is a great place to grow up, where children and young people are protected from harm and supported to be the best they can be in life. To realise this vision the Strategy identifies six key priorities:
  - Working in partnership with families
  - Understanding the needs and strengths of children, young people and their families
  - Developing a system which meets children, young people and family's needs and is accountable for improving outcomes
  - Ensuring that most children and young peoples' needs can be met in local, inclusive mainstream schools
  - Developing and maintaining a range of local, high quality specialist provision for those who need it
  - Ensuring children and young people achieve their potential and ambitions, and live as independently as possible.
7. Each of the priorities has a clear set of partnership commitments which will form an action plan which will be monitored by the SEND strategic group.
8. The strategy will be steered by the governance structure as outlined in Section 6 of the strategy document. It will go to Cabinet to and Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group committees in June. Following formal approval, the Strategy will be promoted through a Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group and Stockton Parent Carer Forum joint communications plan to support wider communication across the borough.

## **COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS**

9. The strategy has been developed to enable the Council and partners to fulfil duties under the Equalities Act 2010, and is designed to enable children and young people with additional needs to reach their potential.

## **CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

10. Around 30% of all children in our care have some form of special educational need. Therefore this strategy directly contributes to the delivery of improved support for children in care.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

11. There are no direct financial implications from the strategy. The bulk of provision for children and young people with SEND is funded with the Dedicated Schools Grant, and in particular the High Needs Block. The proposals in the strategy will be funded by this and by existing resources held by the key partners.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

12. The strategy sits within the legal framework of the Children's Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) which set out the legal context for how we support children and young people with SEND and their families. The strategy also takes into account the requirements of the following:
  - Children Act 1989, 2004
  - Autism Act 2009

- Autism Strategy 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- Care Act 2014

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

13. The implementation of the strategy will be managed in line with established risk assessment systems. Although the strategy is non-statutory, it has been designed to ensure that there are effective approaches in place to ensure that the needs of children and young people are identified, assessed and responded to in line with statutory requirements.
14. The strategy also forms an element of the local area's response to the 2019 SEND Local Area Inspection.

## **WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS**

15. The strategy has been co-designed with partners and with the Stockton Parent Carer Forum. It will also be presented to the Children and Young People's Partnership in May.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16. SEND Code of Practice 2015

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