

London Borough of Enfield

Cabinet Report

Meeting Date: 14 September 2022

Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Partnership Strategy 2023-2027

Cabinet Member: Cllr Abdul Abdullahi

Executive Director: Tony Theodoulou, Executive Director of People

Key Decision: KD 5515

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks agreement by Cabinet to recommend the SEND Partnership Strategy to Full Council on 21 September 2022.

Proposal(s)

2. This report proposes that the new SEND Partnership Strategy be agreed by Cabinet and recommended to Full Council for approval and adoption.

Reason for Proposal(s)

3. The SEND Partnership Strategy will replace Enfield's [SEND Education Strategy \(2018\)](#), which has now expired.
4. The strategy will provide strategic direction for the Council and our local SEND Partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, which is led and chaired by the local authority, working together with practitioners across Education, Health and Social Care as well as our Parent/Carer forum and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups.

Relevance to the Council Plan

5. We have high aspirations for every child and young person in Enfield. We want them to achieve their best. This includes at all stages of their learning, everyday life, in their health and wellbeing; and as they take their next step towards independence and adulthood. To achieve this, we must support and empower our families to give their children the best start in life; and we must enable our children and young people to discover and achieve their goals and to shape their lives and futures in the way they want. The SEND Partnership Strategy is therefore crucial to supporting our work to **inspire and empower young Enfield**, as part of building **safe, health and confident communities**.

6. The SEND Partnership Strategy seeks to embed a culture of embracing difference, and where we work together to make Enfield an inclusive borough where SEND is everyone's business. Through prioritising inclusion, this strategy will positively contribute to a **Fairer Enfield** and contribute to wider work to build **an economy that works for everyone**.
7. Finally, the SEND Partnership Strategy will also assist the Council in its objective to be a **Modern Council**, which **targets resources smartly**. The proposed priority to strengthen our knowledge and understanding of our SEND community and their needs is intended to help us enhance the way we plan, strategically commission and deliver the services and support that children, young people and their families need, both now and in the future. This is crucial to ensure we effectively manage our resources to provide equity for all our children and young people, in a way that responds to the changing needs of our diverse community.

Background

8. The SEND Partnership Board brings together representatives from our parent and carer groups and expertise from education, health, social care and the voluntary and community sector. The partnership is chaired by Enfield Council's Director of Education.
9. A dedicated SEND Strategy Development Group was established under the Board, with responsibility for overseeing the development of the new SEND Partnership Strategy, to replace the [SEND Education Strategy](#). The previous strategy focused on 3 important priorities to:
 - 1) Identify, assess and intervene early where children and young people have SEND.
 - 2) Improve access and participation in early years settings and schools.
 - 3) Support a successful transition to adulthood.
10. Since 2009, the national SEND system has been subject to a significant amount of change. This included the introduction of the [Children and Families Act \(2014\)](#), the [SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years \(2014/15\)](#) and the [Care Act \(2014\)](#).
11. Since the publication of our SEND Education Strategy in 2018 there has been further change to the national system both in response to ongoing challenges and deepening inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the Government's work to support children and young people with SEND they have recently published a new [National Disability Strategy](#) (2021), which is committed to improving the experience of disabled children and young people at school and while accessing education. As well as a [national strategy](#) for improving the lives of autistic people and their families and carers in England. Most recently, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have launched a consultation on proposals for a new

joint framework for inspecting local provision for children and young people with SEND, with new inspections to be introduced in 2023.

12. Additionally, an Independent Review of Children's Social Care and the Government's '[SEND Review: Right Support, right place, right time](#)', have also been published. The SEND Review importantly has identified 3 key challenges facing our children, young people and families across the country at present.¹ These are:
 - Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for too many children, young people and their families.
 - Outcomes for children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision are consistently worse than their peers across every measure.
 - Despite the continuing and unprecedented investment, the system is not financially sustainable.
13. The SEND Review has set out the Government's plans to respond to these challenges. They intend to strengthen the SEND system, including through improved early and consistent identification of SEN in the early years; improved workforce development; a standardised and digitised Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process and template; establishing clearer systems, roles and accountability; and funding reforms.
14. Our new strategy has taken into account the Council's current statutory duties, and where necessary the strategy will be updated to respond to national guidance, best practice and legislative changes in the future.

Main Considerations for the Council

15. The new SEND Partnership Strategy sets out our shared vision, 4 principles and 5 priorities, for the Council and our SEND Partnership as we work together over the next 4 years to support every child and young person with SEND, up to the age of 25. This includes our children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those who receive Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support at their school or educational setting.
16. Enfield currently maintains EHCPs for 3.5% of 0–25-year-olds in Enfield. Although this is below the national average of 3.75%², the local area has experienced a much higher growth in the number of EHCPs each year since 2018, when compared with the national average. As of January 2022, 10.6% of pupils attending Enfield schools and settings receive SEN Support.

Our Vision, Principles and Priorities

¹ [SEND Review: Right Support, right place, right time](#)

² Number of Enfield council Maintained EHCPs at 31 March 2022

17. **Our vision** is for all our children and young people with SEND to have high aspirations and to achieve positive lifelong outcomes.

18. **Our 4 principles are:**

- **Principle 1:** Listen to our children, young people and families and make sure they are at the heart of decisions about themselves and their borough
- **Principle 2:** Empower and enable our children, young people and families to be as independent as they can be
- **Principle 3:** Work together to deliver the right support, in the right place and at the right time
- **Principle 4:** Make sure all families receive fair and sensitive treatment

19. **Our 5 priorities are:**

- **Priority 1:** Know our local area and effectively plan for the needs of our children, young people and families
- **Priority 2:** Identify needs early and provide the right support, in the right place, at the right time
- **Priority 3:** Make sure inclusion is at the heart of our services and communities
- **Priority 4:** Deliver high quality, effective and timely Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) and Plans (EHCPs)
- **Priority 5:** Develop opportunities for children and young people with complex needs to have high aspirations, participate and thrive

Developing the SEND Partnership Strategy

20. The SEND Strategy Development Group was established to help share experiences, provide context and give guidance as to the contents of this strategy and future action plan. The multi-agency group included expertise from Education, Health and Social Care and the voluntary sector. Members worked closely with the Council's Corporate Strategy Service and met regularly to shape the strategy.

21. The expertise and experience of our Strategy Development Group was brought together with research, local evidence of need and benchmarking of other local authorities to inform our draft.

22. In spring 2022, a targeted engagement programme was carried out with local stakeholders. The primary objective of the engagement programme was to seek the views of our stakeholders across the SEND Partnership on the draft

strategy. In doing so, we were able to further develop and improve our strategic approach, vision, priorities, principles and inform action planning. Through our engagement, we:

- Gained feedback on the draft vision, principles and priorities and their associated objectives.
- Gained insight into ongoing challenges experienced by those delivering services to enhance the draft and inform future action planning.
- Enhanced the document's readability and accessibility.

23. We used a variety of different methods to gain feedback from local practitioners, parents, carers and individuals with lived experience. This included virtual focus groups, questionnaires, engaging through existing forums and attending the annual Our Voice conference (attended by over 80 parents and carers).

24. The following groups participated in the engagement programme:

Group	Date
LBE: Strategic Service Development & Procurement Board for People's Services	2 Feb 2022
LBE Joint Service for Disabled Children Team meeting	9 Feb 2022
LBE: Educational Psychology Service Meetings	23 Feb 2022
North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group Governance meeting	3 March 2022
Voluntary Sector Strategy Group (VSSG)	7 March 2022
LBE: Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny	9 March 2022
Special education Needs Coordinators (SENCo) during 3 sessions	9 Feb, 10 & 16 March 2022
LBE: Children and Family Services Operational Management Group Meeting	10 March 2022
'Meet the SEND Heads' Parents Conference	11 March 2022
SEND Partnership Board (all members)	14 March 2022
Enfield Thrives Together	15 March 2022
Headteacher and Principal Sessions during 2 sessions	17 & 18 March 2022

25. In May 2022, we invited our local All About Us SEND participation squads to share their views on being safe, healthy, happy, included and prepared for their independence and adulthood. Durants School and West Lea School took part and hosted discussions with their groups at school. The Co-ordinators shared summaries of the discussions and the comments made during their sessions. Young people in the local VIPs SEND Youth Groups (a skills and activity hub working with children and young adults with SEND) also shared their experiences of being included at school and in their communities during their youth club sessions. These sessions formed part of the Council's work to inform our Inclusion Charter as well as our SEND

Partnership Strategy. These sessions took place on 22 November 2021, 15 February and 1 March 2022.

26. The views and ideas shared with us during our engagement programme with practitioners and young people have helped us to better understand experiences locally including what is working well and what needs to be improved.
27. The draft was agreed by members of the SEND Strategy Development Group on 14 July 2022 ahead of presentation to the People Department Management Team (DMT), the SEND Partnership Board and the Executive Management Team (EMT).

The SEND Partnership Strategy Governance Structure

28. The strategy has been circulated to Enfield's Local Authority led SEND Partnership Board for their agreement ahead of approval at Cabinet and Full Council and the document has been updated accordingly to reflect their feedback.
29. The SEND Partnership Board are responsible for overseeing the delivery, monitoring and review of this strategy.
30. Delivery of the actions set out in the strategy will be the responsibility of a named partner, who will be required to report on progress through their relevant internal governance structures as well as to the SEND Partnership Board. Leads for all actions in the strategy will be set out in an operational action plan for the partnership.
31. Following the publication of the strategy, a series of success measures will also be published later in 2022 alongside the strategy on the Local Offer for SEND. These measures will align with the priorities of the strategy and will provide indicators to track our progress.
32. The strategy will be reviewed every two years, and where necessary it will be updated to respond to local and national changes.

Safeguarding Implications

33. There are no negative safeguarding implications.
34. The SEND Partnership Strategy sets out a vision for all our children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to have high aspirations and to achieve positive lifelong outcomes. In practice, this means making sure all our children and young people with SEND are safe, healthy, happy and included in their educational setting and communities.
35. Implementation of the strategy is subject to relevant policies, underpinned by the Council's approach to safeguarding all our children and young people, including those attending out of borough provisions.

In relation to the engagement process, we have ensured that no residents were put at risk through participation. We did not require consultees to give personal identifying details on their survey responses (where relevant providing details of title and organisation were optional), and feedback collected during focus groups was anonymised.

Public Health Implications

36. The strategy embeds the SEND Partnership's commitment to make sure that our children, young people and their families get the right support at the right time, by identifying and assessing their needs early. Early identification is an important first step to making sure children and young people benefit from the right services and support that they need to help them to thrive. This includes early identification of health and care needs, and early intervention and prevention to support the best possible health and wellbeing at all stages of childhood and as our young people with SEND transition to adulthood.
37. The strategy highlights the importance of the first 1,001 days of a child's life (up until the age of 2), and the impact this can have on the development and life chances of our children and young people. This includes how well they build relationships, school achievements and future job prospects, and overall health and wellbeing.³ The strategy also recognises that a child's development and life chances are influenced by a multitude of factors such as early relationships, the care they receive, living in poverty, or becoming looked after.⁴
38. Research and insights also identify that our children and young people with SEND are more likely to experience poorer life outcomes and have less opportunities than their peers⁵, and many of the issues and inequalities faced by our children, young people and their families have been exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns.⁶
39. The strategy embeds our commitment to tackling the inequalities experienced by our children and young people with SEND, and the partnership will continue to strengthen early identification and early intervention services. This includes making sure we have high quality SEND provision from the early years, which we know can reduce the likelihood of a child or young person being identified with SEN later on.⁷
40. The strategy also embeds the SEND Partnership's commitment to working together to support the delivery of the [early help services](#) that wrap around our families to make sure they can access the right information, advice and support for their child's individual needs and their family circumstances, in a timely way. This includes supporting our families to give their children the best start in life, through services such as midwifery, health visiting and

³ HM Government (2021) [The Best Start for Life: The Early Years Healthy Development Review Report](#) (A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days)

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ [SEND Review: Right Support, right place, right time](#) pp.20

⁶ Council for Disabled Children (2022) [Investing in early intervention](#)

⁷ [SEND Review: Right Support, right place, right time](#) pp.39

parenting support; and enabling families to access early help including housing, debt and income advice.

41. Furthermore, the strategy recognises existing challenges relating to the EHCP process, and timely and effective completion of annual reviews. The North Central London Integrated care partnership (ICPs) have been actively included in the development of the strategy and are committed to having the right mechanisms in place to make sure health practitioners and clinicians fully support the integrated EHC needs assessment process, providing information, advice, support and interventions to meet identified need within statutory / stated timescales.
42. Finally, the strategy includes a dedicated priority focused on supporting our children and young people with the most complex medical and/or mental health needs to thrive. This sets out our commitment to making sure the partnership has the right integrated offer that is responsive and personalised to their identified and changing needs. This includes working together with the North, Central London Transforming Care Partnership (TCP) to make sure that our children and young people with learning disabilities and/or autism can grow up and remain living in their local community and close to their families.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

43. The strategy sets out our vision for all our children and young people with SEND to have high aspirations and to achieve positive lifelong outcomes.
44. To analyse the impact of this strategy on various groups in the borough, we have completed a robust Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) enclosed with this report as appendix 2. Based on this assessment it is anticipated that the SEND Partnership Strategy will have a positive impact on all our children and young people with SEND and their families and this strategy is not expected to have any adverse impacts on any groups listed under the protected characteristics.
45. This assessment identifies that within our SEND community there is evidence of overrepresentation, including in relation to ethnicity and sex (the over representation of boys in EHCPs and receiving SEN support is evident locally, nationally and regionally). It is recommended that were possible, the delivery of Priority 1 should explore opportunities to enhance the Partnership's understanding of available equalities data relating to overrepresented groups as part of our work to better understand the profile and needs of our local SEND community.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

46. The strategy is not expected to result in adverse impact on the environment or increase energy consumption.
47. At present 17% of children and young people with SEND attend out of borough education placements. The strategy embeds the SEND Partnership and the Council's commitment to growing our local provision, so that our

children and young people can be cared for and educated locally. This will positively contribute to a reduction in emissions generated by longer journeys via car, taxi and specialist transport.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

48. As a local authority we have statutory duties that we must fulfil in supporting our children and young people with SEND and their families. This includes (and is not limited to) those duties set out under the [Children and Families Act \(2014\)](#), the [SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years \(2014/15\)](#) and the [Care Act \(2014\)](#).
49. The strategy provides a clear overarching strategic direction to the Council and our local Partnership through a shared vision, principles and priorities, setting out how we will work together to deliver improved outcomes for our children and young people with SEND. This strategic direction is informed by research, best practice, benchmarking and local evidence of need. This includes our Self Evaluation Framework, which has identified what is working well and what needs to be improved and is further informed by local engagement carried out on the draft strategy. Having a clear strategic direction enables our partnership to work collectively towards shared objectives, therefore supporting us to continue to effectively meet our statutory duties and responsibilities well.
50. If the decision is taken to not agree the strategy, the local authority and SEND Partnership will be without a clear and shared vision, principles and priorities. This could in turn undermine the effectiveness of the partnership as they continue their work to meet needs and crucially improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND and their families.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

51. There continue to be ongoing developments in the national SEND system, and the local authority is likely to be subject to some changing duties (and/or approaches to fulfilling existing duties) stemming from proposals set out in the [SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time](#) (Green Paper); and any further introduction of new national policy and or legislation around support for children and young people with SEND and their families. For instance, the strategy if agreed in September 2022, will be published ahead of a future SEND White Paper.
52. To mitigate the risk that our strategy ceases to comply with national policy and regulation, we will carry out a review every two years and where necessary update our strategy to reflect national and local changes. An associated action plan will accompany the strategy (which brings together the Self Evaluation Framework and our strategic priorities). This will be a live document throughout the lifecycle of the strategy and will be updated to reflect any changes.

Financial Implications

53. No direct financial implications have been identified in this report;
54. If, in order to deliver this strategy, there needs to be a change to the current use of resources or if additional resources are required, these will be the subject of separate reports and the financial implications will be provided in each case;
55. As part of the strategy, the Authority has started to implement early intervention strategies which aim to identify and support children's needs at the earliest possible stage, which should reduce the longer term costs of supporting some children throughout their education. These projects are in the early stages but will be monitored to assess impact both on outcomes for pupils and the financial cost of support;
56. The outcome of the DfE SEND Review may impact on funding arrangements for pupils with SEND and updates will be provided when information is published.

Legal Implications

57. The Children and Families Act 2014 ("CFA") together with the guidance in the SEND code of practice explains the duties local authorities owe to disabled children, young people and those with special educational needs. Local authorities must ensure that children, young people and parents are supported to access the right provision to meet their needs, and involve children, young people and their parents/carers in decision making at both the individual and strategic level and provide information, advice and support to children, young people and their parents/carers.
58. In addition, local authorities have a duty under the CFA to keep under review, the educational provision, training provision and social care provision made in its area for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability and to the extent that such provision is sufficient to meet needs.
59. The SEND Partnership Strategy will assist the council in fulfilling its duties under the CFA, Care Act 2014 and Equality Act 2010.

These legal implications were provided by I. Deuchars on the report received on 18/07/2022

Workforce Implications

60. No direct workforce implications have been identified by this report.
61. If a requirement for additional resource is identified to support this Partnership a separate proposal and supporting restructure report will need to be prepared in accordance with the Council's Principles for Managing Reorganisations. This will outline the resource required and the reporting structure.
62. HR advice should be sought prior in relation to the above point.

Property Implications

63. The strategy embeds a commitment to making sure all our children and young people receive an excellent education, and their needs are effectively met in an educational setting or environment that is right for them. Wherever possible, this should be in a local mainstream setting. As a result, the strategy further embeds the Council's existing commitment to increasing in-borough SEND provision, this includes increasing the number of [Special Resourced Provisions](#) (SRPs), and [designated units](#) in mainstream schools.
64. This document, however, provides an overarching strategic direction for how the local SEND partnership will support our children and young people with SEND and does not introduce new and expanded plans with implications for property. Such decisions would be the responsibility of relevant departments and would be agreed through the Council's formal governance and decision-making structures.

Other Implications

65. No further implications have been identified.

Options Considered

66. Not applicable.

Conclusions

67. The SEND Partnership Strategy sets out a clear vision, principles and priorities for the local authority and our partners as we work together over the next four years to support our children and young people with SEND and their families. This decision will enable the partnership to have a clearly agreed strategic direction to support us to effectively meet our statutory duties and responsibilities.

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Appendices

1. SEND Partnership Strategy 2023-2027
2. Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

Not applicable