


## LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

Meeting / Date	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>8th October 2020</b>	
Report Title	<b>Waltham Forest Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2020/21 – 2022/23</b>	
Cabinet Portfolio	Councillor Grace Williams, Portfolio Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families	
Report Author/ Contact details	David Kilgallon, Director of Learning and Systems Leadership Families Directorate <a href="mailto:David.Kilgallon@walthamforest.gov.uk">David.Kilgallon@walthamforest.gov.uk</a>	
Wards affected	All	
Public Access	OPEN	
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Waltham Forest SEND Strategy Appendix 2 – What have we done to date? Appendix 3 – Equality and Impact Assessment	

### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council is committed to maximising positive outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families. The SEND Improvement Board has set an ambitious programme to transform the experience of families and the delivery of high-quality services to achieve the best for our children. We have a vision of every child benefitting from the best start in life, enabled by our whole community of parents and professionals, supporting our younger community members to be happy, healthy, develop, attain and thrive. We understand that by taking a whole system approach and positively minded by the African proverb “it takes a whole village to raise a child”, we can build on and align with our community strengths, to achieve well-being for children and young people with SEND.
- 1.2 The Council has statutory duties under the Children & Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 to provide for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The 0-25 SEND Strategy sets out an approach which supports the achievement of positive outcomes for young people with SEND.

- 1.3 This report seeks approval of a Waltham Forest SEND Strategy and implementation plan. The aim of the Strategy is to deliver on the SEND Vision therein so that *“Children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) will achieve well in early years, at school, at college and lead happy and fulfilled lives.”*

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - 2.1.1 Approve the SEND Vision and Strategy as set out in Appendix 1.
  - 2.1.2 Note the engagement undertaken with local stakeholders in the co-design of the SEND Strategy, including interest groups, health commissioning and delivery partners set out in Appendix 2.
  - 2.1.3 Note that the Council has established the SEND Improvement Board as a project delivery mechanism to drive through the positive agenda of SEND transformation as outlined in the strategy document and vision (see Appendix 1).
  - 2.1.4 Agree to delegate the decision to make amendments within the lifetime of the Strategy that are necessary to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of our residents, to the Portfolio Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families in consultation with the Strategic Director of Families, Strategic Director of Finance and Governance, and Director of Governance and Law.

## **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Background: There are just over 45,000 children and young people of school age in Waltham Forest and about 1 in 6 of them are identified as having SEND: a total of just over 7,000 pupils. Waltham Forest is one of London’s growing boroughs, with the population expected to grow by 9.5% by 2025. The school-age population is projected to grow at a similar rate during this same period, rising to 48,500. It is likely this growth will result in as many as 100 more children and young people who need to be supported through an EHC plan. In Waltham Forest we are seeing an annual increase of EHCPs at 11% per year.
- 3.2 The largest group by primary need with an EHCP in Waltham Forest is that with autistic spectrum condition (ASC), at 31% followed by those with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), at 26%, which approximates the profile of need nationally.
- 3.3 The Strategy has been developed and co-designed in partnership with the local Parent Forum, CCG, education, commissioning, social care, and SENCOs. The work in creating the SEN Vision and Strategy began in November 2019 and has been led by the new Assistant Director Special Educational Needs and Disability Services. It was intended that Cabinet would be asked to approve these in April of this year, however, due to the COVID outbreak this was postponed to October.,

- 3.4 The strategy identifies eight priorities to:
- Strengthen a Local Offer which is accessible and supports children and young people to achieve the best they can in education and in life.
  - Meet children and young people's needs and outcomes via an EHCP process which is effective and in line with Code of Practice expectations and supports them to develop their independence.
  - Deliver good quality statutory social work for the 0-25 age range of children and young people alongside the EHCP process.
  - Provide clear, comprehensive and integrated health pathways, which support children and young people to live and learn well so they can be healthy, active and visible in their local communities.
  - Support children and young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood so they can live independently and secure work opportunities.
  - Support carers (including young carers) in their caring role and to have a healthy life outside of caring.
  - Explore opportunities to improve efficiencies and effectiveness across the service through the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT).
  - Provide high quality, local, inclusive nursery and education provision which supports independence and achieving the best possible outcomes.
- 3.5 This strategy sets out a framework for change and the basis for key measures for success. The vision and priorities will be communicated through a leaflet, printed and disseminated in public offices with partners, as well as available electronically via the Council's website.
- 3.6 The SEND Board and SEND Improvement Board are updated regularly on our self-evaluation of the local SEND system, in preparation for inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. As the SEND agenda covers education, health and social care, system wide change will require individual business cases for change to be developed and presented over the lifetime of the strategy, for decision by the appropriate governing body. Other changes will be made through how we work with schools and remodelling existing systems to enhance how we deliver our services for families.

#### **4. OPTIONS & ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 No other options were considered as the Council is committed to delivering with partners to achieve the best combined support and enablement.

It is important that the Council has a Strategy in order to set out the vision for provision for SEND locally, across education, health and social care. A primary driver for this strategy is to enhance the combined alignment, direction and delivery of services across education, social care and health to enable families with children and young people with SEND to live well and thrive to the best of their abilities. It is part of a range of ways in which the Council delivers the statutory duties set out under the Children and Families Act 2014.

#### **5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES (AND OTHER NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES)**

- 5.1.1 Families at the Heart of our Place is the strengthened approach to Think Family delivery and is about building on our existing expertise and continuing to deliver an improved and sustainable offer to families in Waltham Forest. The working group to take forward the full implementation of the SEND Strategy is the SEND Improvement Board, which will ensure we have a positively impactful programme of delivery.

#### **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Strategy has been developed and co-designed in partnership with the local Parent Forum, CCG, education, commissioning, social care, and SENCOs. The work in creating the SEND Vision and Strategy began in November 2019 and has been led by the new Assistant Director Special Educational Needs and Disability Services.
- 6.2 A number of key reports and then relevant documents have been considered to explore and analyse the wider context and local need i.e. Local Area SEND inspection 2017 and 2019, Children's services inspection 2019, SEND Self-evaluation etc.
- 6.3 All stakeholders, as outlined above reviewed and inputted into the evolving Strategy and in addition included an operational SEND service away day on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The service away day involved all professionals involved in operational service delivery and was attended by SEND service, SENCOs, Designated Clinical Officer, Education Psychology service, Designated Medical Officer and others. The SEND Strategic and Improvement Boards have overseen the development of the Strategy and its sign off.

## **7. IMPLICATIONS**

### **7.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk**

**7.1.1** The SEND Strategy and the recommendations in this report have been developed so that they can be implemented within the existing budgets available to relevant services. However, if in preparing to implement the recommendations officers assess that they are not sustainable within existing resources and that additional expenditure is required, a report will be brought back to Cabinet to explain either: a) why the recommendations cannot be implemented; or b) proposals to finance their implementation.

### **7.2 Legal**

7.2.1 The law related to special educational needs (SEN) is now within Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (CFA 2014) which replaced the previous scheme in Part 4 of the Education Act 1996.

7.2.2 When carrying out their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities must do so with a view to making sure that services work together where this promotes children and young people's wellbeing or improves the quality of special educational provision (Section 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014). Local authorities and health bodies must have arrangements in place to plan and commission education, health and social care services jointly for children and young people with SEN or disabilities (Section 26).

7.2.3 The SEND code of practice: 0–25 years (2015) sets out statutory guidelines for organisations which work with, and support, children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.

7.2.4 The decision recommended to adopt a Waltham Forest SEND Strategy is part of a range of ways in which the Council may demonstrate compliance with the statutory framework.

### **7.3 Equalities and Diversity**

7.3.1 The Council must take into account its wider Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 when making its decision. Members are referred to Appendix 2 (the Equality Analysis) that sets out the nature of the duty.

7.3.2 An equality analysis was undertaken to ascertain the potential impact the strategy will have on groups that share protected characteristics. The equality analysis concluded that the strategy will have a positive impact for children and young people and those living with disabilities as it will set out to improve the outcomes and life chances for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

### **7.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)**

7.4.1 The Council, with its partners, are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND to achieve excellent outcomes for the people of Waltham Forest. Implementing a

transformational SEND Strategy will positively impact on local sustainability.

## **7.5 Council Infrastructure**

7.5.1 The proposals contained in this report are put forward to enable needs to be met within existing and available infrastructure and resources.

## **7.6 Brexit**

7.6.1 Increased certainty in relation to the direction of travel of the Brexit process has led to reduced risks of financial instability that could impact on financial planning referenced in this report. However, the Council shall continue to review the position to identify any change in circumstances which could have a detrimental impact on current recommendations included within this report and will develop any appropriate contingency planning.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)**

N/A