

Report to:

**RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer:

Philip Thompson, Head of SEND

Date of Meeting:

7 February 2019

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide an update on Special Educational Needs (SEND) provision in Blackpool.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 Free School

To note the new Social, Emotional and Mental Health Free School for Blackpool will be open for September 2020.

2.2 SEND Strategy

To note that the SEND Service has been consulting on the new SEND Strategy for the Local Area and to provide a contribution to the Strategy before the final version is published shortly.

2.3 Early Years

To note that the Early Years' Service is consulting on a draft Early Years Strategy and Implementation Plan for the Local Area.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To input into strategy development.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

- Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Free School

Given the limited savings that could be delivered by opening in the Oracle, combined with the likely unviable position in which this would place the Trust, it is recommended that plans to open in September 2019 are not taken forward. A significant amount of work would be required to enable this to happen at a time when the focus needs to be on Ofsted requirements, and any savings that could be realised would be negligible in comparison to the effort required.

It has been agreed the opening date is put back from April 2020 to September 2020, given that the earlier date is unlikely to be financially viable for both the Council and the Trust. The later date will allow for a better planned lead-in time, with the best chance of success for the new school.

5.2 SEND Strategy

The Local Area is required to publish a strategy detailing how the needs of young people with SEN will be met. This new strategy will replace the current strategy that ended in December 2018. The strategy has been out for public consultation since November 2018 and closed on the 4 January 2019. The draft strategy has also been shared with Parents and the Young Peoples voice forum for SEND. The Young Peoples Forum has produced a child friendly version.

Since the introduction of the Children and Families Act in 2014, the Local Area is required to publish on their Local Offer a SEND Strategy. The strategy must be consulted on with wider partners and stakeholders. It must include arrangements on how the Local Area plans to meet the needs of young people aged 0-25, and how they will have their needs identified and supported if they have a Special Educational Need.

The SEND Strategy vision is:

‘for all young people in Blackpool, particularly with SEND or who are looked after, to have the right support and opportunities at the right time. So that they become resilient, happy and successful in their adulthood.’

This will be done by undertaking the following:

- To support early years providers and mainstream schools to improve inclusion and education for all children with SEND.
- To develop a continuance of local provision and services to meet the needs of children with SEND.
- To improve post 16 education, employment and training.
- Children and young people with SEND to enjoy good physical and mental health and wellbeing emotional health

5.3 Early Years

The Local Area is required to publish a strategy detailing how it will support and educate early years children and support their family in supporting their children for school readiness.

The strategy is in the early stages of development and the authority is still meeting with partners to discuss the strategy and its content.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, the Children and Families Act and the Early Years Workforce Strategy published by the government place a requirement on local authority areas to follow the frameworks and plan and monitor the quality of Early Years education. This new strategy will support meeting these requirements and will detail the LA priorities for the next three years.

The Early Years strategic objectives will be:

- Improve health and wellbeing for children in Blackpool and reduce inequalities
- Support and Increase parents' knowledge and skills
- Children ready for school and schools ready for children
- Support the development of high quality leadership together with a highly skilled and responsive workforce
- Integrated working and system change

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 7(a): SEND Strategy

Appendix 7(b): Young People Friendly version

Appendix 7(c): Early Years Strategy

6.0 **Legal considerations:**

6.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, the Children and Families Act and the Early Years Workforce Strategy published by the government place a

requirement on local authority areas to follow the frameworks

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 There are resource implications for the Local Area, as most of the functions are statutory partners and the LA should have staff in place to perform the roles identified in the strategy.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 Covered in the appendix documents.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 Free School

There are financial considerations for the Free School and they are detailed in the appended options paper.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are risk to the delay in opening of the Free School, they are highlighted in the attached options paper.

The risk of not having a SEND strategy would be highlighted through a local area OFSTED SEND Inspection.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 Covered in the appendix documents.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 The SEND strategy will need to be agreed at the SEND Board. Health and other partners sit on the SEND Board. The Strategy has been out for public consultation and has also been through the young people's voice forum for SEND.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None