

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Philip Thompson, Head of SEND and Early Years
<b>Meeting</b>	28 January 2021

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the implementation of the current Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy.

The current strategy expires at the end of 2021 and in February a working party will begin to review and create a new strategy. Members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee will be involved in this working party.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

- 2.1 That the Committee notes progress made to date and provides appropriate challenge and support to facilitate further improvement.

### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

- 3.1 To fulfil the Committee's scrutiny role in seeking assurance.

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

- 3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? **Yes**

### **4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:**

- 4.1 There are no options to be considered at this time, this report is an update on progress so far.

### **5.0 Council priority:**

- 5.1 The relevant Council Priority is: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

### **6.0 Background information**

- 6.1 The update requested by the Committee to cover the post-16 elements of the strategy has been expanded to cover the whole strategy as progress towards the post-16 outcomes has been hampered due to the impact of Covid-19.

6.2 **Priority One - To support early year's providers and mainstream schools to improve inclusion and education for all children with SEND.**

6.2.1 The Inclusion Advisory Teacher Team has taken on four additional staff. These staff will focus on early identification and support schools with meeting the needs of pupils with SEND much earlier.

6.2.2 A graduated Approach framework and toolkit has been developed with partners to support the early identification of SEND and to provide a toolkit of support tools for education settings. Over 400 school-based staff have participated in online learning courses developed by the Council.

6.2.3 In 2017, 68 per cent of Education, Health and Care plans issued resulted in children attending special school. In 2019-2020, it was 35 per cent. A significant improvement for inclusion in mainstream schools.

6.2.4 Blackpool still has 20 per cent of its school-aged children identified as having special educational needs. The national average is 14 per cent. Blackpool also has 4.6 per cent of its children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, national is 3.4 per cent.

6.3 **Priority Two - To develop a continuance of local provision and services to meet the needs of children with SEND.**

6.3.1 In November 2020 the Council received a national award for parental engagement in developing the local offer and provision.

6.3.2 The consultation with Mainstream Schools to open Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision units in their schools went well and there were five successful applications:

- Marton has opened a provision for children with Autism and complex needs for 32 pupils with EHC plans.
- Mereside will offer a respite provision for children with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) for 12 pupils.
- Thames has opened a provision for children with SEMH for 12 pupils with EHC plans.
- Boundary will open a provision for children with SEMH for 12 pupils with EHC plans in January.
- Revoe has opened a provision for children with Moderate Learning Difficulties and complex needs for 12 pupils with EHC plans.

6.3.3 There are no provisions as yet at secondary level but talks are ongoing with those Headteachers.

6.3.4 The Lotus Free school for children aged 10-16 is now open and has 21 pupils across year 6, 7 and 8.

6.4 **Priority Three - To improve Post-16 education, employment and training.**

6.4.1 The Council is working with Special School partners in considering the extension of the estate of the Special Schools to The Oracle building on St Anne's Road. This provision will create a post-16 centre of excellence for SEND, to support the reduction of Young People not in education employment or training in Blackpool and support young people into college or work.

- 6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? **No**
- 7.0 List of Appendices:**
- 7.1 Appendix 6(a) - SEND Strategy
- 8.0 Financial considerations:**
- 8.1 The appointment of four additional Advisory Teachers and the cost of the resource provision has been agreed and is being funded by the designated school grant and Schools Forum and aims to reduce the related overspend.
- 9.0 Legal considerations:**
- 9.1 Children and Families Act 2014 compliance is covered by the SEN Strategy.
- 10.0 Risk management considerations:**
- 10.1 There are no decisions to be taken within the report but the risk of the Council not meeting statutory requirements for children with SEND is significant and can impact the Council financially and with regards to its reputation.
- 11.0 Equalities considerations:**
- 11.1 Children and young people with disabilities have protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Implementing the SEND Strategy fulfils the Council's legal obligation to ensure young people with disabilities receive an education.
- 12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**
- 12.1 Sustainability is covered in the appended strategy.
- 13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**
- 13.1 Internal and external consultations will take place in respect of the review of the strategy as they have in previous years. The Council will in this review have a focus on co-production of the vision and strategy.
- 14.0 Background papers:**
- 14.1 None