

Committee report

Committee	CABINET
Date	21 OCTOBER 2008
Title	STRATEGY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS/LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND DISABILITIES (SEN/LDD) 2008 – 2012
Report Of	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Purpose	To approve the strategy, which has had some minor revisions following consultation

1. Background

Note that in the remainder of this report the term ‘special educational needs’ will be abbreviated to ‘SEN’ and the term ‘learning difficulties and disabilities’ will be abbreviated to ‘LDD’

1.1 A Local Authority must have a strategy for children and young people with SEN and/or LDD, setting out its vision for the next few years and how it will achieve this. The previous SEN strategy was published in 2006 and is due for revision now in the light of a requirement for a much stronger focus on integrated working and in the light of the comprehensive Review of SEN Provision undertaken in summer 2007 by external consultants. This strategy draws on both of the above and on needs identified by stakeholders. A working group of officers met on 6 occasions between December 2007 and May 2008 to draw up the strategy; a draft was shared with the SEN Parents’ Voice group on 2 April and revisions made as a result of parents’ comments.

1.2 The strategy was presented to the Policy Commission for Children and School Results on 14 May 2008. At that meeting, the strategy was approved and the timeline for consultation agreed.

1.3 Following consultation, the revised strategy was presented at an informal meeting of the Policy Commission for Children and School Results on 25 September 2008. Members asked that those who had offered suggestions as part of the consultation be issued with written feedback explaining the reasons their suggestions had or had not been incorporated into the revised strategy. Members asked that the Policy Commission be presented with an annual report on the progress of the strategy. Members were assured that if all the initiatives were implemented provision for children with special educational needs/learning difficulties and disabilities would be improved and that those supporting such children would feel much more confident about meeting their needs. Policy Commission approved the strategy.

2. Consultation

2.1 Consultation took place between 28 May and 25 June 2008 with all stakeholders (Health, Voluntary Associations, Parent's groups, Children's Services Directorate staff and schools) via the Intranet, the Isle of Wight Council website, the County Press, the Parent Partnership officer, fliers in GP surgeries, libraries and Children's Centres. A reply form was provided for ease of response (Background Papers).

2.2 25 responses were received: 9 from Local Authority Children's Services staff, 7 from school staff, 2 from Health staff, 3 from or on behalf of parents, 1 from a Governor and 3 unspecified. There was strong overall support for the principles and for the proposed actions.

2.3 Respondents felt it was a good concise strategy, well thought out and would have a positive impact on children and young people.

2.4 There was support for

- Enhancement to the Autism service
- Development of nurture groups in schools
- Creation of an advisory service for children with physical disabilities
- Extending out of school activities for children/young people with SEN/LDD
- Developing unmet/specialist need on the island rather than using expensive off island placements
- Integrated working but only if it becomes a reality

2.5 A number of issues were highlighted in the response forms:

- Transition, particularly to adult services and the role of Connexions, needs to be strengthened in the strategy
- The value of special schools needs to be made more explicit and not seen as second best to mainstream schools
- There is a need for significantly more training for staff involved in SEN/LDD
- More collaborative work with Health professionals and the voluntary sector
- Specific mention should be made of specialist CAMHS
- The creation of pooled budgets with accountability to the Children's Trust
- The need for more time from educational psychologists for assessment
- The need to be more explicit about the Local Authority response to the recently published Bercow Review of speech & language therapy services, in terms of more training and a review of the current arrangements between health and the local authority
- Not all SEN/LDD services were specifically mentioned in the strategy

2.6 Individual responses are attached at Background Papers.

2.7 Below is a summary of issues raised in the consultation, whether or not the issues have been accepted and what action will be taken as a result:

Issue raised in consultation	Comments	What action will be taken as a result (page references are to the main prose strategy document)
Enhance the Autism service and extend its remit to deal with children/Young people with ADHD and other complex difficulties	Accepted	This will be considered in the budget setting process.
Support schools in developing nurture groups to address the needs of children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).	Accepted	This will be considered in the budget setting process.
Commission an advisory service for pupils with physical disabilities to ensure their needs are met where possible on the island.	Accepted	This will be considered in the budget setting process.
Extend out of school activities for children/young people with SEN/LDD	Accepted	This will be considered in the budget setting process, but note that there is revenue and capital funding coming into the authority through the Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHfDC) programme.
Develop unmet/specialist need on the island rather than using expensive off island placements	Accepted	Much of the strategy is about developing our provision and skills on the island. However it is accepted that there will always be a very small number of children whose needs cannot be met on the island. In these cases we need to be monitoring the quality of that provision very carefully.

Issue raised in consultation	Comments	What action will be taken as a result (page references are to the main prose strategy document)
Integrated working but only if it becomes a reality.	Accepted	The authority is committed to integrated working through the Directorate restructure, the work of the Children's trust, the introduction of the CAF and locality working, and the realignment of the SEN support services.
Transition, particularly to adult services and the role of Connexions, needs to be strengthened in the strategy	Accepted	Revision page 13
The value of special schools needs to be made more explicit and not seen as second best to mainstream schools	Accepted	Revision page 5
There is a need for significantly more training for staff involved in SEN/LDD	Not accepted	This is already in the strategy e.g. the roll out of the inclusion development programme, the support services working more to enskill staff.
More collaborative work with Health professionals and the voluntary sector	Not accepted	This is stated throughout the strategy, e.g. in terms of the commitment to integrated working and the provision of information.
Specific mention should be made of specialist CAMHS	Accepted	Revision page 11

Issue raised in consultation	Comments	What action will be taken as a result (page references are to the main prose strategy document)
The creation of pooled budgets with accountability to the Children's Trust	Accepted that more discussion will be needed on this issue	This is something that will need further discussion at the Children & Young People's Trust Executive; however note that there is already joint funding of very complex off island provision through the Joint Commissioning Solutions Panel.
The need for more time from educational psychologists for assessment	Accepted	Revision page 7
The need to be more explicit about the Local Authority response to the recently published Bercow Review of speech & language therapy services, in terms of more training and a review of the current arrangements between health and the local authority	Accepted	Revision page 9 and the LA is contributing to the PCT led review of speech & language therapy services across the island.
Not all SEN/LDD services were specifically mentioned in the strategy	Accepted	The strategy focuses on the priorities over the next 4 years; we will still be maintaining services, though the focus will shift from individual work with children to more enskilling of others and a more integrated holistic response to problems.

Issue raised in consultation	Comments	What action will be taken as a result (page references are to the main prose strategy document)
Acronyms omitted from the glossary	Accepted	This glossary will need to be updated as new acronyms come on stream. An additional term has been added to the glossary page 16.

2.8 The strategy has been revised where appropriate to incorporate the main points arising from the responses. If a suggestion did not lead to a revision then justification for this is set out the table above. Revisions have been made in the main strategy document and the accompanying action plans.

2.9 If approved by Cabinet, the strategy will be published in the Autumn.

2.10 An SEN/LDD strategy and reference group will be set up to monitor and evaluate the impact of the strategy; this will link to and be part of the overall Learning and Achievement strategy group.

3. Financial/Budget Implications

Some of the developments in the strategy have financial implications and these will be considered through the budget setting process.

4. Legal Implications

Legislation on SEN is enshrined in the Education Act 1996 Part IV and in the Education (Special Educational Needs) (England) (Consolidation) Regulations 2001 and also the SEN Code of Practice (2001). Actions outlined in the attached strategy will help the LA to better carry out its statutory functions and to reduce the number of appeals to the SEN & Disability Tribunal.

5. Options

1. Approve the revised strategy
2. Reject the revised strategy
3. Refer back to Policy Commission for further work

6. Risk Management

The main risks to the Local Authority arise from:

- Not having a clear and specific SEN/LDD strategy – this would result in the LA being subject to negative judgements by external agencies. Note that the previous strategy was criticised for being too general and not specific enough. This strategy aims to redress this and consultees considered that its aims and actions were clear.
- Not monitoring and evaluating the strategy once it is in place –

at **Strategic and Service Management Section, Aim 7** it is proposed to re-establish the SEN/LDD Strategy & Reference Group to evaluate the strategy.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation and monitoring will be via the SEN/LDD Strategy and Reference Group, reporting to the Children and Young People's Trust Executive.

8. Recommendation

Option 1 – To approve the revised strategy.

9. Appendices Attached

Appendix - Strategy for SEN/LDD 2008 – 2012 (revised) – including 5 documents:

- (i) [Strategy for children and young people with Special Educational Needs / Learning Difficulties and Disabilities 2008-2012 – prose](#)
- (ii) [Strategic and Service Management Action Plan](#)
- (iii) [Provision Action Plan](#)
- (iv) [Communication, Partnership & Participation Action Plan](#)
- (v) [Positive Outcomes for Children and Young People Action Plan](#)

10. Background Papers

1. Report to Policy Commission for Children and School Results 14 May 2008 and 25 September 2008
2. Response form proforma for consultees
3. 25 Individual/group responses

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