

Cabinet

18 March 2021

SEND & Inclusion Change Programme – Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group

Recommendation

That Cabinet approve the recommendations of the SEND & Inclusion task and finish group as set out in Section 2 of the report.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 County Council agreed a motion on 22nd September 2020 requesting that ‘the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to set up a Task and Finish Group to monitor delivery of SEND provision.’
- 1.2 The report and recommendations of the task and finish group were presented to Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 February. The full report is attached as Appendix A.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet are asked to approve the recommendations set out below:
 - i. The transition period – ensure that children and families do not fall into a gap between introducing new arrangements and ending existing arrangements, and that unreasonable expectations are not made of schools as a result.
 - ii. Prioritise early identification and early intervention in early years.
 - iii. Assurance of procedures that information travels with the child across local authority borders
 - iv. Ensure joined up working practices. Families have to work with multiple professionals. The coordination of support (e.g. therapies) often falls on schools. Use the EHC plan as a mechanism to ensure better joined up working.
 - v. Support our schools and settings and all staff who are supporting our children with complex needs to maintain appropriate placements. This should include the use of early identification, SEND audits, capacity building programmes and investment in training (such as autism and dyslexia)
 - vi. Fair and transparent funding – including consideration of the financial context of each setting. Each child has different needs and each setting is in a

different context and may need different levels of resources – it is not the same for all schools. Schools supporting our children with higher levels of need must be resourced appropriately and transparently.

- vii. Resource Provisions should be embraced and supported. Schools should be supported to ensure that provisions have reputations for celebrating inclusion and operate sustainable financial models
- viii. More information should be made available to parents. There is potential for a dashboard of information to be made available.
- ix. Provide a fact sheet for members to know what to do if they are asked by a school or parent about their provision
- x. Members to prioritise meeting new members of the Parent Carer Forum (expected to re-launch in April).
- xi. Establish a Members' SEND Panel with parental input
- xii. Ensure that the impact of Covid-19 on families of children with SEND is evaluated and appropriately supported

3. Financial Implications

No additional financial implications have been made as part of these recommendations. The SEND & Inclusion Programme will bring forward requests for Sustaining Transformation resources as project trials and evaluations progress.

4. Environmental Implications

There are no specific environmental implications arising from the decision being made as part of this report.

Background Papers

None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Other members: Councillors Dahmash, P.Williams, Chilvers, C.Davies, Skinner, Adkins, Bell, Simpson-Vince, Hayfield, Gissane, Phillips, Rickhards.

APPENDIX A:

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

SEND & Inclusion Change Programme – Report of the Task and Finish Group

22 February 2020

Recommendation

To approve the recommendations of the task and finish group set out in Section 3 of the report.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 County Council agreed a motion on 22nd September 2020 requesting that 'the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to set up a Task and Finish Group to monitor delivery of SEND provision.'
- 1.2 The scope of the task and finish group was agreed at the first meeting. It was agreed to align with the scope of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme. The focus of the group was confirmed as:
 - a. Providing confidence and assurance to Overview and Scrutiny on the approach and governance of the programme
 - b. Identifying projects/ themes of focus that Overview and Scrutiny may wish to monitor progress more closely
 - c. Identifying ways in which Members could add value to the objectives of the programme
- 1.3 The group consisted of six Elected Members with other Elected Members also in attendance. The group was chaired by Cllr Yousef Dahmesh.
- 1.4 Four meetings took place between November and January, focussing on:
 - The statutory and financial framework for SEND & Inclusion
 - The aims and approach of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme
 - Feedback from headteachers
 - Discussion on key points and recommendations for the report

2. Discussion

- 2.1 Session One focussed on the statutory and financial framework for SEND and Inclusion, and in particular some of the complexities within the system. Within the discussion, it was noted that:
 - Outcomes need to be clear and monitored

- Not all outcomes for children with SEND will be academic, many will be about life skills. These should be captured in a personalised plan.
- Our system should focus on evidenced needs and not wait for medical diagnosis
- We need to take on board the pressures faced by schools since the SEND reforms came in – especially financial
- It would be helpful to hear from schools about whether the Change Programme will work for all settings

2.2 Session Two focussed on the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme including the aims of the programme, the prioritisation of projects and the approach to involving stakeholders. Within the discussion, it was noted that:

- There is work to be done moving forward to work closely with partner agencies/stakeholders and member support will be invaluable in this area.
- Improve signposting and communication
- There is potential for a dashboard of information to be made available to parents that could provide information relating to help, support and contacts, learning outcomes.
- Identification and intervention in early years should be a clear principle of change, including working with health colleagues
- Resources must be made available for parents and carers and schools
- A Members SEND Panel could be set up, similar to the Corporate Parenting Panel
- Where children cross local authority borders, information should travel with the child
- The programme must identify any children not on a school roll and make sure children receive their educational entitlement

2.3 Session Three involved a question and answer session with three Warwickshire head teachers representing a primary school and resourced provision, a secondary school and a special school. Within the discussion, it was noted that:

- The quality of EHC plans is essential to ensure that the right professionals are in place to offer support
- Needs have changed significantly in the last ten years
- The workforce has also changed significantly, often leading to a smaller workforce supporting a larger cohort of learners with higher needs
- The Ofsted framework for inspection has changed recently to support inclusion
- It is important that all information about the child is shared as part of the admissions process to support successful transition
- In some areas special schools are working closely with mainstream schools to share specialisms as part of an outreach programme.

2.4 Session four focussed on the recommendations (below). There was particular discussion on ensuring that, in moving from one set of arrangements to another, families did not get caught in gap with a low quality of support and

schools did not get caught in a situation of inadequate resources and training to meet the needs of learners with SEND.

3. Conclusions

3.1 The group reflected on the evidence presented at the previous three sessions. The following recommendations were agreed. It was asked that where this links with existing projects in the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme, for this to be highlighted, and to identify any financial implications in addition to the current programme allocation.

Ref	Recommendation	Projects within SEND & Inclusion Change Programme	Financial Implications
1.	The transition period – ensure that children and families do not fall into a gap between introducing new arrangements and ending existing arrangements, and that unreasonable expectations are not made of schools as a result.	Monitor through O&S Committee and SEND & Inclusion Partnership	None
2.	Prioritise early identification and early intervention in early years.	Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Expanding and Improving Access to Early Intervention in Early Years (birth to 5) b) Service Review IDS 0-5 team 	Forecast increased spend in early years accounted for. Outcomes of service review and financial implication not yet known
3.	Assurance of procedures that information travels with the child across local authority borders	No specific project. Part of continuous improvement within SENDAR.	None
4.	Ensure joined up working practices. Families have to work with multiple professionals. The coordination of support (eg. therapies) often falls on schools. Use the EHC plan as a mechanism to ensure better joined up working.	Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Quality Assurance Framework for EHC plans b) Changing the Conversation (trailing new ways of working with schools) c) Multi-agency services on the Pears site 	No financial implication from Quality Assurance Framework (live project). The trial in the Changing the Conversation project will identify financial implication for roll-out on evaluation. The plans for the multi-agency service on the Pears site will bring together joint working

			for those with mental health needs.
5.	<p>Support our schools and settings and all staff who are supporting our children with complex needs to maintain appropriate placements.</p> <p>This should include the use of early identification, SEND audits, capacity building programmes and investment in training (such as autism and dyslexia)</p>	<p>Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Workforce Development project b) Needs-led Panels project includes the publication of local SEND Guidance 	<p>Financial implications of workforce development to be identified following confirmation of local SEND Guidance (already accounted for). The SEND Guidance will provide clarity on expectations on schools including early identification of need and best practice interventions for different categories of need</p>
6.	<p>Fair and transparent funding – including consideration of the financial context of each setting. Each child has different needs and each setting is in a different context and may need different levels of resources – it is not the same for all schools. Schools supporting our children with higher levels of need must be resourced appropriately and transparently.</p>	<p>Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) School Top-Up Funding 	<p>Financial modelling will be based upon better targeting of existing resources, particularly diverting more resources to mainstream settings. Precise modelling and trialling to take place in the project.</p>
7.	<p>Resource Provisions should be embraced and supported. Schools should be supported to ensure that provisions have reputations for celebrating inclusion and operate sustainable financial models</p>	<p>Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Resourced Provision 	<p>Resourced provision is identified as an invest to save with regard to revenue funding. Capital funding requests are brought before Cabinet as part of the Schools Capital Programme.</p>
8.	<p>More information should be made available to parents. There is potential for a dashboard of information to be made available.</p>	<p>Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Redesigning the Local Offer 	<p>None – already costed within the programme. Project is live.</p>
9.	<p>Provide a fact sheet for members to know what to do if they are asked by a school or parent about their provision</p>	<p>Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Redesigning the Local Offer (ensure that the information online would reflect this or provide something bespoke) 	<p>None – already costed within the programme. Project is live.</p>

10.	Members to prioritise meeting new members of the Parent Carer Forum (expected to re-launch in April).	Project: a) Expanding the representation of the Parent Carer Forum	None.
11.	Establish a Members' SEND Panel with parental input (subject to Cabinet approval)	No specific project – officers to work with Members to establish this	None (support from Education Services and Democratic Services)
12.	Ensure that the impact of Covid-19 on families of children with SEND is evaluated and appropriately supported	To be addressed as part of the Covid-19 Recovery Plan following further evaluation	To be determined

4. Financial Implications

4.1 No additional financial implications have been made as part of these recommendations. The SEND & Inclusion Programme will bring forward requests for Sustaining Transformation resources as project trials and evaluations progress.

5. Environmental Implications

5.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from the decision being made as part of this report.

6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

6.1 Recommendations are to be implemented in accordance with the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme timeline. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny will monitor progress regularly, at least annually.

Background Papers

None

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Local Member(s): None

Other members: Councillors Dahmash, P.Williams, Chilvers, C.Davies, Skinner, Adkins, Bell, Simpson-Vince, Hayfield, Gissane, Phillips, Rickhards.