

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE: 28 JANUARY 2025

REPORT OF: COUNTY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: REFERRAL OF COUNTY COUNCIL MOTION (MOTION 11 iii)
(10 DECEMBER 2024)



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

At the County Council meeting on 10 December 2024, Councillor Liz Townsend moved a motion under Standing Order 11.

Under Standing Order 12.3, Councillor Clare Curran, the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning moved a proposal that the motion be referred to the Cabinet for more detailed consideration.

The proposal to refer the motion was put to the vote and received support.

RESOLVED:

That the motion be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

MOTION DETAIL:

This Council recognises that:

Children and young people have a legal right to special educational provision and support that meets their needs. However, currently too many children and young people are not getting the education and support they need, with long-term consequences for their educational outcomes and overall wellbeing, together with that of their families.

Many parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs often find the system to access education an arduous and expensive battle that brings families to breaking point.

Part of the process that they report causes much distress is the panel decision making process. This is the point when decisions are made about their child behind closed doors often by unknown professionals, and to which the individual case officer, who is involved with the families on a day-to-day basis, is not automatically invited.

This Council acknowledges that:

Many parents do not currently feel that the panel process is transparent or consistent. These panels are making significant decisions about the future of children and young people with additional needs, and it is important parents are part of the process.

Due to its closed nature, many parents and carers often feel that vital information is not adequately covered and, in some cases, omitted. Once a decision is made, the rationale provided to parents and carers for this is often reported as inadequate and this compounds a feeling of exclusion and mistrust.

This Council notes:

This process is not a statutory requirement and could be changed in line with The SEND code of Practice [SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk) that sets out the requirements to involve families and young people in decision making.

This Council resolves to call on the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to commit to:

- I. Provide the opportunity for parent/carers of children with additional needs to be involved in the panel decision process with a clearly defined role.
- II. Provide the opportunity for the child or young person with additional needs to be involved in the panel decision process with a clearly defined role.
- III. Ensure the relevant case officer is automatically invited to attend panel decision meetings.

<u>NEXT STEPS:</u>

In line with Standing Order 12.5, Councillor Liz Townsend will be invited to present her motion at the 28 January 2025 Cabinet meeting with the motion seconder, Councillor Paul Follows also being invited to speak.

In line with Standing Order 12.6, Cabinet will report upon the motion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

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