

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE:** 31 JANUARY 2023**REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER:** CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING**LEAD OFFICER:** RACHAEL WARDELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING**SUBJECT:** SURREY INCLUSION AND ADDITIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY**ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA:** TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy (Annex 1) sets out the commitment of the Surrey Additional Needs and Disability Partnership to work together to enable all children with additional needs and disabilities in Surrey to thrive and achieve their full potential. With Cabinet endorsement of the Strategy, the cross-agency working groups can press ahead to deliver the ambitions of the Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Endorses the Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy 2023-26 and in doing so approves the following ambition statement for children with additional needs and disabilities:

“Our aspiration is to enable Surrey children and young people aged 0-25 with additional needs and / or disabilities to lead the best possible life. This strategy sets out our ambition that all Surrey children and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities and their families:

- are heard and are involved in the decisions that affect them
- achieve positive outcomes, including the opportunity to lead healthy lives
- develop positive relationships
- learn and achieve their educational potential, and
- become increasingly independent where possible and flourish within their community

To achieve this, we will work in partnership with families and colleagues across education, health, social care and the third sector to:

- improve experiences and outcomes for children, young people and their families and ensure that no-one is left behind

- be a champion for children and young people with additional needs and/or disabilities
- ensure children and young people are rooted in Surrey and educated locally, wherever possible
- learn from our feedback and continue our improvement journey”

This statement has undergone significant consultation with children and young people, parents, public, partners and officers over the course of 2 months. It builds on the extensive work undertaken to formulate and coproduce the area partnership self-evaluation and incorporates an ethos of inclusivity as well as responding to children and young people’s needs as they arise.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is a requirement of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated SEND Code of Practice to “ensure that all children and young people are able to access the right support and provision to meet their needs”.

The Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy 2023-26 replaces the Surrey ‘SEND’ Partnership Strategy 2019-2022 and underpins the additional needs and disabilities transformation programme. The strategy sets out the commitment of the partnership to work together to enable all children with additional needs and disabilities in Surrey to thrive and achieve their full potential.

DETAILS:

1. ‘Local Area Partnerships’ are expected to work together to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with ‘SEND’. In Surrey the Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership Board is the governance mechanism for partnership accountability and the membership includes representatives across Education, Health, Social Care as well as our third sector and user voice partners. The Surrey Additional Needs and Disability Partnership works within the statutory requirements of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) and has regard to the guidance within the associated [SEND Code of Practice](#) to “ensure that all children and young people are able to access the right support and provision to meet their needs”. This also means strong engagement of children and parents in individual and strategic decision making, publishing our local offer, jointly commissioning effectively and providing excellent information, advice and guidance. This Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy 2023-26 replaces our previous SEND Strategy 2019-22.
2. The Surrey Additional Needs and Disability Partnership has been on an improvement and transformation journey since 2016 to not only respond to growing demand and new legislation, but to also ensure a whole system approach to assessing and responding to need which integrates the roles of health agencies, and schools as well as the local authority. This is expressed in the [Community Vision for Surrey in 2030](#) which states that “by 2030 we want Surrey to be a uniquely special place where everyone has a great start to life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community and no one is left behind.” Supporting children

to get the best start in life is also a clearly prioritised within Surrey's [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), and in the [Fuller Stocktake](#) in which Surrey Heartlands Health & Care Partnership outlines the approach to partnership working with primary care on a neighbourhood level, as well as how organisations will work together to create and support healthy communities.

3. The journey to this integrated partnership approach has been undertaken in a changing environment which has included a global pandemic, an evolving health system to an Integrated Care System, accompanying new joint commissioning arrangements, and new case management systems. This journey has been neatly summarised in the image in Annex 1, appendix 1: Roadmap. The Surrey Additional Needs and Disability Partnership have spent a significant amount of time reflecting on the systems' strengths and weaknesses, which are outlined in the Self-evaluation, Joint Commissioning Strategy for Children and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The partnership approach is visible through a commitment to transformation and '**rooting children, young people and families in our hearts and minds**'. Surrey established the Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership in 2019 to provide leadership and system-wide transformation to support its ambitions.
4. In Surrey in 2022 the number of statutory Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) was approximately 12,700 which constitutes approximately 4.6% of the school population, compared to 4% as the England average. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was recorded as the primary need in 34% of EHCPs, and the majority of plans were for males (73%). Autism, Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Moderate Learning Difficulty were the need areas of largest growth over the last 5 years. [Surrey's All-Age Autism Strategy](#) sets out plans in detail for meeting these needs.
5. To respond to growing levels of need, as well as to balance the local market, SCC have invested just under £140m in the maintained special school estate, bringing about just under 2,500 new specialist school places before 2027 (1600 on track to be delivered by 2024) for children with significant needs identified in their EHCP. This, coupled with a strong focus on inclusion in mainstream schools will ensure children with an EHCP have excellent, local provision available to them. The full range of services available to children and young people with additional needs are detailed on the [Surrey Local Offer](#) website.

Principles - summary

6. These are shown in the '5 Pillars of Partnership' below (a-e). In addition to these there are principles around the ways to deliver and govern to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people (f&g).
 - a. "We will seek to co-produce our individual assessments as well as systemic changes alongside children, young people, parents, carers and partners
 - b. We will invest in early identification of SEN and offer comprehensive information and support to all those experiencing SEN and those around them
 - c. We will work as a partnership to ensure that all pupils are included where possible in their education establishment and broader community
 - d. We will work with adult services to ensure our young people with SEN are well prepared for adulthood

- e. We will jointly commission key services to ensure we focus our collective resources around those with the greatest need, and that services collaborate well in their endeavours to meet needs.
- f. We will ensure excellent leadership, governance and accountability
- g. We will work to ensure that our systems connect well and that our practice is of the highest standard to improve children and young people's outcomes"

A Partnership Endeavour

- 7. It is recognised that children and young people with additional needs can face additional pressures and complexities as they develop and learn. It is also understood that the foundations of an independent, economically active, and resilient adult life are rooted in having a good level of development in early childhood and an inclusive education. The partnership approach to embed the social model of disability, underpinned by strength-based practice and informed by children and young people's needs will enable them to build on the best start in life and positive outcomes in adulthood.

Language

- 8. Language is extremely important and the Surrey Additional Needs and Disability Partnership are recommending embedding the language set out in the Surrey [ATLAS Preferred Terminology](#) report. This includes the use of "Additional Needs and Disabilities" rather than "Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or SEND", wherever possible, however, there will sometimes be a need to continue to use the term 'SEND', while this is the term used in national legislation.

Principles – detail

- 9. For each principle, the strategy details the Surrey Additional Needs and Disability Partnership's ambition, followed by a description of what works well in that area and what needs focus to change over the course of the next three years. Below are the ambitions for each principle. Annex 1 provides the full report where the detail of what works well and areas for improvement can be found. These are extracts from the strategy and as such are written on behalf of the Surrey Additional Needs and Disability Partnership – using terms 'we' and 'our'.
- 10. **Leadership, Accountability and Governance**
Our partnership will work together to lead our system for inclusion and additional needs by creating change, overseeing and being accountable for improvements to our services. We will have an accurate, shared understanding of children and young people's needs in Surrey and will engage with children, young people and their families in our leadership roles. We will strive to create an environment and culture of excellent practice where multi-agency support around a family can flourish and we will comprehensively evaluate our provisions as part of a continuous commissioning cycle.
- 11. **Co-production**
We will actively work in co-production with children, young people, and families to ensure they are part of our decision-making right across our organisations, 'rooting them in our hearts and minds'. Children, young people, and their families

will participate fully in decision-making about their individual plans and support, whilst leaders at every level will actively engage and work with children, young people, and families in service design and delivery.

12. Early Identification and Support

Children and young people's needs will be identified at the earliest opportunity, providing the right level of help at the right time. We will work together as a partnership to promote independence where possible as well as provide up-to-date information to support communities to self-help early. Additional needs will be identified and responded to in a timely and effective way by those already working with children, young people and their families. This will prevent escalation of need where possible.

13. Inclusion in Education and Community

We want all children to access education, feel empowered and be able to challenge judgement, stigma and negative behaviour that can be a barrier to their future outcomes. This means we will embed the social model of SEN whereby communities, educational settings and spaces are inclusive and accessible. Barriers will be removed – whether physical or cultural – so that all our children and young people can thrive and achieve in Surrey. This must be a 'needs-led' approach.

14. Transitions and Preparing for Adulthood

We will take a partnership approach to preparing young people for adulthood from the earliest years, working towards smooth transitions at every stage, and together support them to be independent where possible and resilient so that they can live fulfilled and healthy lives in their own communities. We will work with young people to support them into meaningful employment that is fulfilling, giving a sense of purpose and belonging wherever possible.

15. Joint Commissioning, Sufficiency and Evaluation

Our vision as a partnership is to commission, provide and plan services together to support children and families holistically to live healthy and fulfilling lives. We will strive to work with families in a seamless, yet targeted way which maximises the use of our resources and reduces duplication across agencies. We also wish to learn from children, families, practitioners and other models of good practice, as well as from where we have identified further improvements are needed to evaluate our provisions and set them on a continuous improvement journey, quality assuring periodically.

16. Systems and Practice

We seek to develop positive and meaningful relationships with children, young people and families in all our practice which are trusting and insightful for everyone involved, with safeguarding considered front and centre at all times. Our systems will support this type of work, making it easy to prioritise time to build trusting relationships as colleagues, record key information, share it timely where appropriate and to draw on a range of levels of expertise to fully understand the needs of the children we work with. A focus on partnership recruitment, retention initiatives and continuing professional development will be integral to success."

Measuring Success

17. This strategy draws together a number of focused strategies and plans into a central place. Each of the documents that sit beneath this strategy have a series of Key Performance Indicators to measure impact, and each agency in the partnership has its own performance analysis to ensure it is on track to always improve. However this strategy has overarching statements of quality to demonstrate what good looks like and how that will be measured.
18. The full Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy in Annex 1 provides the detail of these statements of quality indicating what success looks like in each of the areas of principle.
19. Appendix 2 in Annex 1 provides an overview of the governance of the Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy. The groups and boards that sit within each of the pillars of partnership will be the working groups that take forward the ambitions and plans and priorities for the next 3 years. The Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership will monitor this progress to ensure the strategy delivers the change and the pace needed to ensure every child or young person with additional needs and disabilities in Surrey is able to thrive and achieve their full potential.

CONSULTATION:

20. Throughout 2022 a refresh of this strategy has been co-produced with partners. This approach has been overseen by the Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy steering group, the membership of the group includes key stakeholders from education, health and social care alongside the voluntary sector and representatives of families and children and young people with additional needs and disabilities.
21. The co-production process has included the following activities which led to the development of the draft strategy:
 - Regular meetings to develop the strategy from its earliest stages with the Inclusion and Additional Needs strategy steering group
 - Ethnographic research conducted by an independent agency that specialises in social connectedness including six in depth interviews with professionals and sixteen in home ethnographic research interviews with children, young people and families with a broad range of needs, age range and social economic backgrounds.
 - Surveys conducted with parents and carers, teachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, and professionals (3rd sector, Case Officers, Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language Therapists)
 - Collaborative working among the key leads from related strategies from across the partnership to ensure that they are aligned with this overarching strategy, including the Inclusion, All Age Autism, Social Emotional and Mental Health, Best Start and Education strategies
 - Joint working with key partners from the Inclusion and Additional Needs Partnership Board, reviewing the strategy at key milestones

- Virtual and in-person engagement sessions with parent carers and practitioners
- Co-production and engagement on the strategy with children and young people with additional needs and disabilities through Accept, Teach, Listen, Access, Support (ATLAS)
- Consultation work with schools including through the SENCO network and engagement with all of the Surrey School Phase Councils
- Joint working with the parent carer forum, Family Voice Surrey (FVS)

22. This item was tabled at Select Committee on 15th December 2022, the Select Committee provided scrutiny of the Surrey Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy. The cabinet agreed the Surrey Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy subject to the changes below:

- The evaluation criteria listed at paragraphs 50 - 60 of the [Area SEND inspection handbook](#) is used as a guide to set clear goals, thus benefiting from this document's extensive consultation process involving parents, teachers, children and young people and other stakeholders.
- Outline how successes are measured, which will be presented at the performance group by way of monitoring with a clear set of metrics. Targets are to incorporate those set out in the Safety Valve Agreement.
- The strategy is to be presented to allow all parents and young people to identify measurable targets
- Governance illustration needs strengthening by way of an addendum that lists the role and responsibility of each partner, and the role of each of the governance boards to demonstrate accountability. The illustration is to identify how the partnership will work towards achieving the recommendations and the interdependences between each. This is to be displayed in an accessible format for children and young people and their parents and carers.
- Ensure that the local offer website and other digital platforms are used to good effect, including the development of webinars for families on the statutory assessment process and for SENCOs on the assessment criteria.

It was agreed that the Director for Education and Lifelong Learning would report, at every formal meeting of the Select Committee on progress made and barriers to achieving the recommendations.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

Reputational and accountability risk:

23. There is a risk that if Surrey does not have a current partnership inclusion strategy in 2023 that it would be challenging to demonstrate a shared vision and strategy to hold the Partnership account, and this would be unaligned with the 'SEND' Green Paper and expectations of Local Area 'SEND' inspectors, which could be damaging to reputation. The mitigation is that the strategy has been extensively co-produced and is being submitted for democratic endorsement and Partnership adoption in January 2023.

Strategy delivery risk:

24. The strategy is ambitious for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities, because the Partnership including children and families are rightly ambitious. In the context of high ambitions, as well as increasing levels of need post-pandemic and an increasingly difficult economic and financial outlook for most of the organisations within the Partnership, there is a risk that delivery of the strategy could be challenging. The mitigation is not to limit the levels of positive ambition, but to acknowledge the contextual challenges and to focus on what matters most and what makes the most positive difference to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities. The Partnership will be developing an annual delivery plan which will help to keep focus on progress and impact.

Communication and narrative risk

25. The system for supporting children with additional needs and disabilities in England is complex, with multiple services and organisations involved, and stakeholders with varying perceptions and priorities, so there is a risk that it can be challenging to communicate the strategy and change that results from the strategy effectively across the system and community. The mitigations include the development of an Easy Read version of the strategy, working alongside all of our partners to develop the annual plans and measures of success that will make the strategy a reality, and for that same partnership to work together to communicate effectively.

Financial and value for money implications:

26. Financial pressures within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block (HNB) have been significant in recent years. In March 2022 the Council entered into an agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) which provided additional funding if the Council could achieve certain agreed targets over a five-year period.
27. Whilst there are no direct financial implications from the recommendations within this paper, the principles within the Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy align with those contained within the Council's 'Safety Valve' agreement which sets out the plans to achieve a sustainable in-year balance in the DSG HNB by 2027/28.

Section 151 Officer commentary:

28. Although significant progress has been made to improve the Council's financial position, the financial environment remains challenging. The UK is experiencing the highest levels of inflation for decades, putting significant pressure on the cost of delivering our services. Coupled with continued increasing demand and fixed Government funding this requires an increased focus on financial management to ensure we can continue to deliver services within available funding. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2022/23 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.

29. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy and its role in delivering the Council's 'Safety Valve' agreement with the DfE.

Legal implications – Monitoring Officer:

30. The publication of this strategy fulfils a statutory obligation on the part of the Council

Equalities and diversity:

31. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as an annex to the report. In summary, we anticipate that there will be a positive impact resulting from the strategy.

Other implications:

32. The potential implications for the following Council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	The Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy supports the Surrey Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020. Including and better providing for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities and/or who are looked after will enable better long-term outcomes, with children closer to home and more connected to local communities and support services.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	The council has a duty to promote and improve safeguarding in education as well as educational outcomes for all children and young people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. This Strategy sets out how the council will include and improve outcomes for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities
Environmental sustainability	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

33. Next steps and timelines are:

- Strategy Publication online: February 2023
- Children and Young People's Friendly Version published March 2023
- Action Plan written and approved by the Partnership March 2023
- Meeting of Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership to begin monitoring progress: January 2023 onwards

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Details of who has been consulted on the issue (including officers, members, public, stakeholders, partners, etc.)

Accept, Teach, Listen, Access, Support (ATLAS)

Central Surrey Health Surrey

Children and Family Health Surrey

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee

Family Voice Surrey

First Community Health and Care

Mindworks Surrey

NHS Surrey and Borders Partnership

Phase Councils (Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Special Schools)

SENDSCO Network

Surrey Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership Board

Surrey Additional Needs and Disabilities Transformation Board

Surrey County Council

Surrey Youth Focus

Surrey Virtual School

Schools Alliance for Excellence

Send Advice Surrey

Public Consultation in Libraries and Virtual sessions

Clare Curran Lead Cabinet Member

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Rachael Wardell Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

Annexes:

Annex 1 - Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy 2023-26
