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**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY AND FUNDING**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Scrutiny with a summary of plans to consult on a strategic plan for delivering better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and proposed amendments to the application of the High Needs Block in relation to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

**Summary**

2. Following Cabinet approval to commence consultation on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022 and related funding arrangements. The strategy proposes a local vision along with priorities for the future provision and development of services to support children with SEND.
3. The Government funds school via the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to enable them to educate all children and young people including those with SEND.
4. The current funding model for children with SEND in Darlington does not follow best practice and lacks transparency and fairness. Amendments have been made with the agreement of schools to enable the “money to follow the child” but more changes are required to deliver a fair and transparent funding system.
5. Expenditure on SEND within the DSG is projected to considerably overspend and action on an approach to funding and service provision are proposed as part of the amended strategy which will improve the transparency of the system and reduce overall costs.

**Recommendation**

6. It is recommended that:
  - (a) Scrutiny be aware of the forthcoming consultation on the revised SEND strategy and proposed amended funding arrangements.
  - (b) Scrutiny consider and respond to the proposals outlined in the consultation.

## **Reasons**

7. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
  - (a) The strategy provides a framework to drive the work of the SEND partnership in Darlington through to 2022 to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.
  - (b) To enable the proposed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2019 -2022 and the proposed amended funding model to be further considered.

**Suzanne Joyner**  
**Director of Children and Adult Services**

## **Background Papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Tony Murphy: Extension 5637

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	The SEND Strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	The SEND Strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough
Wards Affected	Children and young people with SEND may live in any ward.
Groups Affected	Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision
Urgent Decision	Yes, so as not to delay start of consultation and meet various timescales.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy Priority 'the best start in life'.
Efficiency	There are no direct efficiencies to the Council from the information contained within this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The SEND Strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough a number of these children are Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### The SEND Strategy

8. Darlington's Special Educational Needs Strategy 2017-2020 was approved by Cabinet on 5 December 2017. This updated version builds on progress to date, identifying what has been achieved and our priorities for action up to 2022.
9. The vision for the strategy is that it promotes inclusion, maximizes young people's opportunities to be independent and enables young people with special educational needs and disabilities to be recognized as fully integrated citizens with the ability to contribute to their local community.

10. The strategy has been written to respond to the key priorities set out in the SEND code of practice, and highlights local strategic aims associated with each priority area for implementation. These are set out below:
- (a) **Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support**  
Early identification and intervention is essential to prevent underachievement and improve outcomes and improve children's life chances.
  - (b) **Building capacity in mainstream settings to enable children and young people to be educated in appropriate settings locally**  
Children and young people with SEND need to have good quality support in their mainstream and local settings so that they can achieve their academic potential and maintain their self-esteem and confidence.
  - (c) **Ensuring that children and young people are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities**  
Being educated in their local area enables pupils with SEND greater independence and a sense of contributing and belonging to their local community. Children and young people with SEND tell us that they want to make friends locally and access local facilities with their families.
  - (d) **Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND**  
Address the underperformance in educational achievement across the Key Stages but particularly at Key Stage 4 through targeted interventions, appropriate curriculum, high quality training and effective quality assurance, monitoring and moderation.
  - (e) **Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication**  
Ensuring that all policies, practices are co-produced with all stakeholders and with the active involvement of parent/carers and children and young people.
  - (f) **Achieving 'Best Value' (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services**  
Effective, efficient and co-ordinated services that meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. With increasing demand we must ensure that the right resources are going to the right children in the right place.
11. The SEND Strategy sets out our vision in Darlington for a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to age 25 that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families, and that we expect every early years setting, post 16 provider, mainstream school and academy to have the capacity and confidence to deliver effective provision.

12. The strategy aims to identify children with SEND at the earliest possible opportunity and provide them with the support they need to make good educational progress and achieve good outcomes so that they and their families feel well supported. It recognises the importance of providing good training for all staff, whichever setting they are working in, using the best expertise and knowledge, sharing best practice and by promoting a model of collaborative working and shared responsibility.
13. The strategy aims to ensure education, care and health services are delivered in an integrated way so that the experience of families accessing services is positive and children's and young people's learning and development, safety, well-being and health outcomes are well promoted alongside their educational progress and achievement.
14. Darlington also places a higher proportion of young people with EHCPs in Independent Special Schools (5.1% compared to 2.3% across the North East and 3.7% across England). The average cost of a placement at an independent special school is £70,000 per year.

### **Developing Local Provision**

15. The SEND strategy identifies the key priority of providing high quality local provision. One of the key drivers for the placement of pupils in high cost out of borough independent placements is the lack of suitable local specialist provision.
16. The strategy identifies key areas of consideration of commissioning local provision to meet need and manage demand.

<b>Type of Need</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Delivery</b>
Pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)	Primary	Resource base in a primary schools setting
Pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)	Secondary	Resource base in a secondary setting or Alternative provision
Pupils with Moderate Learning Difficulties	Secondary	Resource base in a Secondary setting

### **Re-shaping of the High Needs Block Funding Mechanism**

17. In order to ensure pupils with SEND in Darlington fulfil their potential the funding system that supports them needs to be transparent and targeted to meet a child's individually assessed and identified needs.

## Consultation

18. Consultation on the revised SEND strategy and the proposed new funding arrangements will take place from the 10 October to the 21 November 2018. The consultation will include:

- (a) consultation and co-production discussion with the Darlington Parents and Carers Forum (DPCF)
- (b) online information and questionnaire
- (c) a letter to all families on the SEN database
- (d) a letter to Darlington education providers
- (e) an information session at a scheduled Darlington Parents and Carers Forum