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| CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | AGENDA ITEM No. 6 |
| 1 NOVEMBER 2018 | PUBLIC REPORT |

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| Report of: | Corporate Director, People and Communities Wendi Ogle-Welbourn | |
| Cabinet Member responsible: | Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University Councillor Ayres | |
| Contact Officer(s): | Sheelagh Sullivan Head of SEN and Inclusion Services | Tel.01733 863702 |

SEND REFORMS UPDATE

RECOMMENDATIONS

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| FROM: Corporate Director, People and Communities Wendi Ogle- Welbourn | Deadline date: N/A |
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It is recommended that the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee:

1. Acknowledge the success of relevant officers in meeting the deadline for transfer of statements to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC plans) in advance of the statutory date set.
2. Offer their support to relevant officers involved in taking forward a multi-agency and inclusive approach to provision for children and young people with SEND in Peterborough
3. Endorse the actions taken so far to produce a joint Peterborough and Cambridgeshire SEND strategy and implementation plan by September 2019

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is presented at the request of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 This report provides:

- An update on the progress towards the implementation of SEND reforms since November 2017.
- Early feedback from the LGA SEND peer review
- Information about the actions taken so far related to the joint Peterborough and Cambridgeshire SEND strategy.

- 2.2 This report is for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council :

Education, including

- a) University and Higher Education;
- b) Youth Service;
- c) Careers;
- d) Special Needs and Inclusion.

2.3 This report links to the Corporate Priority - To improve educational attainment and skills.

2.4 This report link to the Children in Care Promises:

- support you to have a good education
- make sure you are treated at school like any other pupil
- support you to learn and achieve your full potential
- help you to get skills so that you can care for yourself when you are older

3. **TIMESCALES**

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| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO | If yes, date for Cabinet meeting | n/a |
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 Scrutiny members have received annual reports since the implementation of SEND reforms in April 2014. The implementation period for the reforms finished at the end of March 2018. This included the successful completion of the transfer of statements to Education, Health and Care Plans which was anticipated in the 2017 report. This transfer was completed in advance of the statutory deadline. The performance of the team was acknowledged by the DfE and recognised by a team excellence award in Peterborough

4.2 Previous reports to the committee have noted a gradual increase in the timeliness of new Education, Health and Care plans produced within the statutory 20 weeks. In the past year, performance has continued to rise and since January 2018 the number issued within 20 weeks is 97% as compared to 64% in 2017 and 35% in 2016.

4.3 Whilst performance related to new EHC plans has greatly improved, there is still a challenge to issue amended EHC plans in a timely way following annual reviews. Additional staff have been employed and this alleviated much of the backlog that was impacting upon performance. However the demands of the reforms to ensure meaningful reviews will continue to create challenge. The Statutory Assessment and Monitoring Team who are responsible for this area of work have the highest regional caseloads (500 as compared to a regional average of 350). Recent changes have been made to increase capacity and replace additional support lost as the SEND implementation grant funding ceased. It is the likely that improvements to the technology available to review EHC plans with settings are the most realistic way forward. The team will trial various ideas with special schools in early 2019.

4.4 The committee noted the continuing shortage of Educational Psychologists (EPs) in the last report but endorsed the move to traded EP services and the employment of Assistant Psychologists. The national shortage of EPs continues but our traded services are in consistent demand (over 40 schools purchased the service again this year) and the employment of Assistant Psychologists had proved so successful that it is intended to have 3 in place in the new year.

4.5 The numbers of children and young people with EHC plans remains consistent (since 2016) at 3.3% of population. This is higher than statistical neighbours (3.1%) but a reduction since the reforms were introduced in 2014 (3.8%). However the number of EHC plans maintained post 16 has grown substantially (just under one third of the total 1800 average). This reflects a national trend.

4.6 The numbers of children looked after with SEN in Peterborough (37.6%) remains higher than the national average, including the number of children with EHC plans (34.4% against a national average of 26.7%).

4.7 At the beginning of October 2018 a team of peer reviewers was invited to Peterborough through the Local Government Association (LGA) to help assess our performance in relation to SEND reforms and support preparation for the anticipated SEND Local Area Ofsted/CQC inspection. This is new inspection regime operating on a 5 year cycle which is more than half way through.

Over 50% of inspections to-date have resulted in formal letters requesting improvement.

4.8 Whilst the written report from the LGA has yet to be received, some pertinent headlines from the verbal feedback were....

That we have:

- strong leadership and people who are passionate and dedicated
- a parent carer forum that is creative in engaging with families
- innovative practice
- a number of strong referral processes and pathways

They suggested also that we needed to think about:

- ensuring that we involve schools and settings as we roll out new strategy and plans
- sorting out any confusion in understanding or communication (e.g. what 'early' means)
- ensure that everyone is signed up - the reforms are a multi-agency initiative
- identify our priorities as we move forward - the 'killer initiatives'
- consider how we will manage a complex agenda in an era of increasing budget restraint
- consider how we can use our data to help us move on
- continue to involve all stakeholders and engage in open and honest conversations

4.9 The formal feedback will enable plans to take forward SEND reforms in Peterborough post 2018 and into the future through a new SEND strategy and implementation plan.

4.10 The LGA review coincided with the release of the draft Cambridge and Peterborough SEN strategy. There is an ongoing public engagement until 12 November during which feedback is invited from all parties. The theme of the strategy is 'SEND is everyone's business'.

4.11 Responses to the strategy have already been received through online platforms and various groups (including health, education, social care professionals and school governors) have also responded. The majority of respondents through the online platform are parents. Presentations to gather more feedback and raise the profile of the strategy have already been planned for other cross agency professional groups, families and young people.

4.13 Whilst it is too early to know the outcome of the engagement period, there appears so far to be broad agreement for the strategy but also a desire to see the practical actions and changes that will then emerge via the implementation plan. There is also concern that, whilst the strategy is well intentioned, the reality of delivering the SEND agenda beyond the initial reform period is vast and potentially challenging to resource.

4.14 It is intended to involve all stakeholders in the development of the implementation plan for Peterborough and Cambridge that arises from the strategy. There are like to be a number of areas for action that will be reflected in the plan. It is anticipated that both the strategy and the subsequent planning will be in place by September 2019.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 SEND strategy public engagement activity across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire - currently underway until 12 November.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 The intended outcome is to provide a way forward for SEND development in both Peterborough and Cambridgeshire in the short, medium and long term that is robust and able to respond to the needs of both populations.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 To provide support and endorsement for officers and others engaged in the development of the new strategy and subsequent implementation/action plans.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 N/A

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 None

Legal Implications

9.2 None

Equalities Implications

9.3 None

Rural Implications

9.4 None

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 Peterborough and Cambridgeshire SEND strategy - draft

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - SEND Strategy - draft