

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

24 March 2020

Subject: SEND Inclusion Strategy 2020-2023

Cabinet Member: Cllr Pauline Church Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

This report describes the key achievements of the previous (Special Educational Needs and Disability) SEND strategy 2015 – 2019, before setting out the background and the consultation that was taken forward to create a SEND Inclusion Strategy for 2020 – 2023.

This strategy has been developed in co-production with parent/carers, children and young people and the organisations who make up the Wiltshire SEND Local Area Partnership.

The main focus of this strategy is to support the development of inclusion for children and young people with SEND.

As a member of the SEND Local Area Partnership, there are three main considerations for the cabinet:

- To be assured that the strategy reflects the scope of intention regarding SEND inclusion and whether the consultation process appropriately included and enabled Wiltshire stakeholders to engage in the development of this strategy.
- To understand and support how the strategy will be monitored
- To appreciate the financial situation and be assured that the appropriate activity is referred to in this strategy.

The priorities created through the development of the strategy received good support from stakeholders. This strategy seeks to create an overview of the work that that will be taken forward in the next few years to support the education and wellbeing of children with SEND in Wiltshire.

Further detailed plans will come to the SEND local area partnership board to support the development of the priorities included in the attached SEND Inclusion Strategy.

Proposal(s)

To approve the SEND Inclusion Strategy 2020 - 23

Reason for Proposal(s)

To support the work of Wiltshire's SEND Local Area through this SEND Inclusion Strategy 2020 - 23

Terence Herbert

Chief Executive Officer – People

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

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Purpose of Report

1. For cabinet to note and approve the SEND Inclusion Strategy 2020 - 23

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

The strategy supports Wiltshire Council's commitment to support strong communities and protect the most vulnerable. Specifically, improved support for those with mental health or learning disabilities and improved outcomes for children with a disability and care leavers.

Background

2. The previous three year SEND strategy completed at the end of 2019. Seven priorities were established for this three-year period:
 - Priority 1 – Clear, Comprehensive and Accessible Information
 - Priority 2 – Right Place and Right Time
 - Priority 3 – Improving Outcomes & Practice
 - Priority 4 – Focus on Inclusion
 - Priority 5 – Early Identification, Positive Engagement & Improved Transitions
 - Priority 6 – Supporting Settings & Staff
 - Priority 7 – Managing Financial Pressures
3. Over this period the following work was achieved through these priorities:

Priority 1

- The local offer website was established
- Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) established over 2500 members (compared to the national average of 400 members)
- A new training programme led by parent/carers and professionals together for all parents with a child with SEND, called "Time Out for Families", was successfully piloted and will be continued as part of this new strategy
- The Local Area took forward a comprehensive self assessment and established a data dashboard to monitor progress.

Priority 2

- Wiltshire Council was successful in an application for a new free school for 150 children/young people with Autism (ASD) and/or Social Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH)
- An additional 52 resource base places have been created
- A commitment has been established to bring three special schools in the north together as one new school, committing £33m to create up to 400 places across the three sites.

Priority 3

- Key stage one and two results for children with SEND have significantly improved, from being in the bottom quartile of national results to the top quartile by 2018.
- Over 80% of applications for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are completed in 20 weeks compared to the national average of 58%¹
- The conversion of Statements to EHCPs was met to schedule in April 2018, based on person centred planning
- Satisfaction regarding the impact of our short breaks scheme was rated at 97% by respondents and WPC and Wiltshire Council were invited to meet the minister for Education to share the success of this scheme.
- 94% of young people with SEND when leaving education go into further training or employment, this is one of the highest rates in the country.

Priority 4

- 51% of children and young people are in an inclusive school settings (mainstream schools, resource bases or Enhanced Learning Provision) (national average 38%). Wiltshire has continued to invest in resource bases and this has been welcomed by parent/carers
- Training has been taken forward through the Families and Children's Transformation programme (FACT) across the partnership using THRIVE, an approach to trauma informed practice.

Priority 5

- There has been a significant shift towards early intervention which has led to better early years outcome for all children with SEND in the measurement of a Good Level of Development (GLD)
- A new transitions guidance document has been developed and has been well received by professionals and families

Priority 6

- New guidance has been taken forward around banding, funding, referral for EHCPs, annual reviews and the commitment with Virgin Care and Oxford Health for training has been renewed
- New funding has been drawn in to offer school-based support for mental health, with a range of online options
- SENCO² networks have been established

Priority 7

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>

² SENCO – Special Educational Needs Coordinator in schools

- Funding pressures have continued to rise, and while Wiltshire has contained its costs when compared to other Local Areas in the country, overall the growing deficit remains a significant and major concern.
- Over £15m of new funds have been brought into the local area to support SEND priorities in the last 18 months through grants and applications (Army rebasing funds, SEND capital grant, funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to build a new special school in the South).

Wiltshire was also subject to the new SEND Local Area Inspection led jointly by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted. Wiltshire was praised particularly for its partnership working, our commitment to engagement with parent/carers, and our holistic and child centred approach to responding to the changes led by the Children and Families Act 2014. Following the inspection, the CQC/Ofsted can choose to send a letter of improvement to the local area. Wiltshire was one of a minority of local authorities where no letter was required.

“Senior leaders in the local area from education, health and social care are working together constructively to deliver and improve services for children and young people who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. They demonstrate ambition to deliver high-quality outcomes for children and young people, despite the increasing demands on budgets and financial constraints. As a result, they have detailed and appropriate plans in place to tackle their key priorities for improvement”³.

4. Focus for next three years

The new strategy creates a new vision for SEND for the future, building on the work of the SEND local area inspection, blending this work into that of the Health and Wellbeing board and wider strategies such as FACT and the development of the Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG partnership (BSW).

The Vision created with stakeholders through consultation is:

“All children and young people with SEND and their families will have a voice that is heard. They will know how to access, and be able to access the joined-up support they need to thrive in their communities, to enjoy life and reach their full potential”

This is to be underpinned by the following principles, also created by stakeholders, that all children/young people with SEND will:

- **Be safe and feel safe when trying new things**
- **Be able to learn from each other and grow together with all children/young people**
- **Be able to have choice wherever possible**
- **Have access to information and communication for themselves and the people around them that helps them along**

³ <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2763765>

- Experience joined up help and support because this strategy is being coproduced
- Have additional needs identified early so support can start as soon as possible
- Be educated as close to home as possible

The priorities established by stakeholders for the next three years are:

1. Developing holistic plans with children and young people
2. Inclusion and removing exclusion in education
3. Inclusion and wellbeing in the community
4. Improving the range and quality of provision
5. Achievement and progress
6. Well planned transitions

The Stakeholders agreed that we should achieve this by:

- Working with children and young people with SEND so that they can tell us how we are doing
- Setting up a SEND and Inclusion board involving representatives of all the people and organisations who got involved in the consultation and can help us make this strategy happen
- Using the joint agency Families and Children Transformation programme (FACT), the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, Wiltshire (BSW) Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to support and coordinate change through all the relevant organisations
- Working closely with schools/colleges/nurseries on a regional basis to improve inclusion
- Setting up a monitoring process which lets us know if we are achieving our vision linked to each of the priority areas (a SEND Dashboard)
- Creating a budget recovery plan that links to the strategic priorities
- Reporting to everyone about the money to ensure that we can afford these plans
- Developing Quality Assurance e.g. through self-evaluation and peer evaluation for services
- Creating a universal wellbeing check that children and families can use themselves
- Making our strategy and our minutes from the SEND and Inclusion Board available online so that everyone can see what we are doing and achieving
- Having an annual opportunity for all stakeholders to talk about how we are doing to ensure we stay on track, for example by a webinar.

Main Considerations for the Council

5. The strategy sets out a comprehensive response to the views, comments and issues raised by stakeholders through the consultation process. This strategy represents a core document with high levels of engagement which sits amongst a range of strategic responses to the scope of the issues that the local area SEN partnership wants to develop and address. There are separate plans either in place or in development which create the detail behind each of the priorities and actions identified in the strategy.

There are three main considerations for the cabinet:

- To be assured that the strategy reflects the scope of intention regarding SEND inclusion and whether the consultation process appropriately included and enable Wiltshire stakeholders to engage in the development of this strategy.
- To understand and support how the strategy will be monitored
- To appreciate the financial situation and activity surrounding, and included, in this strategy

6. The consultation

There were four main ways in which consultation was taken forward:

a) Meetings with young people

Our Youth Ambassadors met with 21 young people with SEND across Wiltshire. The Youth Consultants took forward in depth interviews with 21 young people across the timescale of roughly two weeks. A relatively small pool of respondents was collated, however a range of age, gender, academic abilities and geographical location was achieved.



Three venues were visited; Lavington secondary school, Hardenhuish secondary school (Chippenham) and Old Sarum Youth Club (Salisbury). This variety allowed the consultants to identify a range of different SEND experiences and identify how reports of these experiences differed between respondents interviewed in an educational (Lavington and Hardenhuish) setting and respondents interviewed in an informal (Old Sarum Youth Club) setting.

b) Face to face meetings with parent/carers and professionals

Officers working alongside Wiltshire Parent Carer Council (WPCC) had three initial meetings across the county with parent/carers, professionals and community members.

Locations	Number of Attendees
7 th October 2019, Assembly Room, Town Hall, Devizes	31
8 th October 2019, Chippenham Golf Club	19

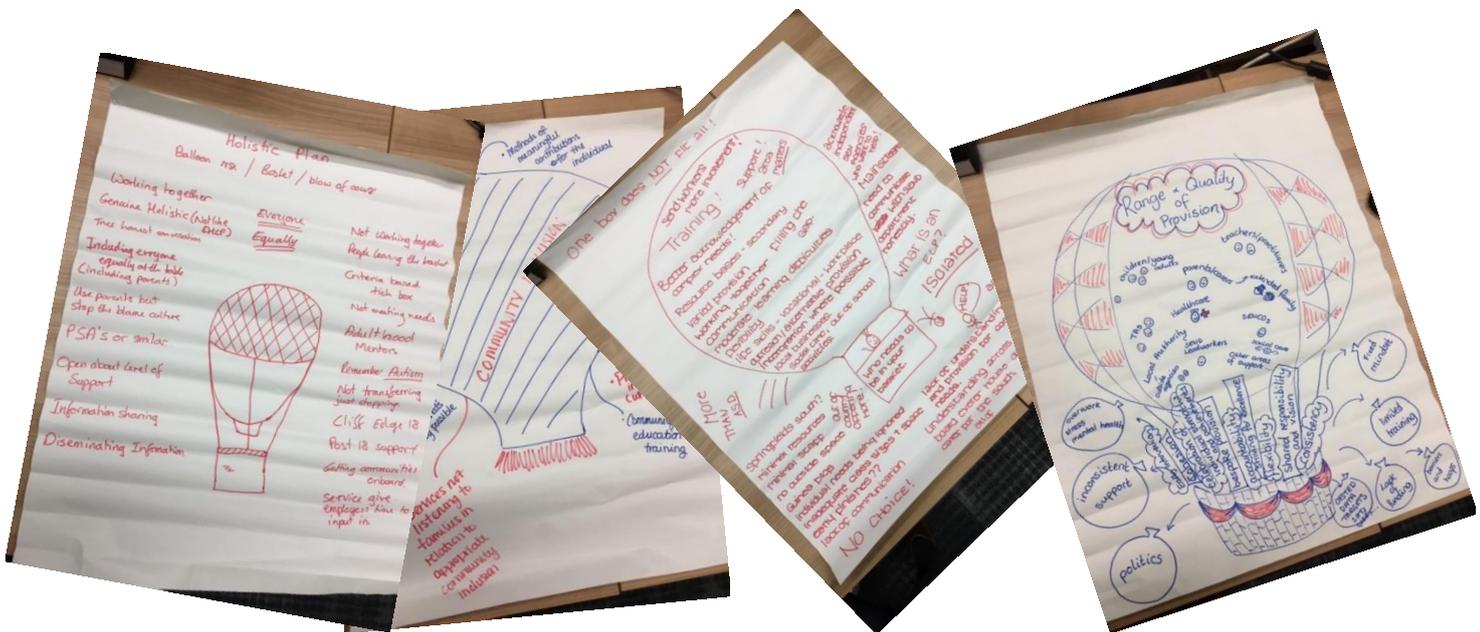
In these meetings a set of slides was shared and then attendees took part in a number of workshop activities to explore what has been achieved so far around SEND and inclusion and what would be important for the future.

The team creating the strategy (WPCC and professionals from across the local area for SEND in Wiltshire) then met together to gather together what had been said. From these deliberations seven priorities were proposed and an initial vision statement set out.

There were then three further meetings, where stakeholders (some from the existing meetings, but mostly new attendees) came together to review the priorities, develop the vision statement and identify key actions for the strategy.

Locations	Number of Attendees
11 th November 2019, Salisbury City Hall	18
14 th November 2019, Corn Exchange Devizes	17
21 st November 2019, Wiltshire College, Chippenham campus	10

Below are photos of some of the notes



c) Meetings with Professionals and schools

The team went to a number of meetings including:

- Head Teachers regional briefings
 - 16th September, Devizes, 18 attendees

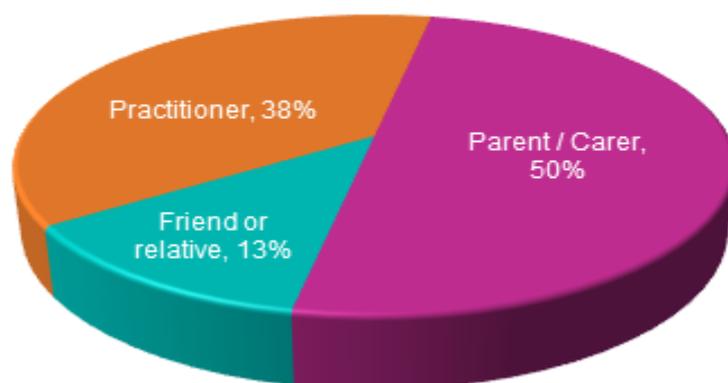
- 17th September, Trowbridge, 38 attendees
- 18th September, Chippenham, 25 attendees
- 19th September, Salisbury, 35 attendees
- Primary Head Forum (PHF) and the Secondary Heads Association (WASH)
- SENCO networks

These were helpful meetings enabling schools to engage with the agenda and discuss their part in making the principles and priorities work in their schools.

d) An online survey

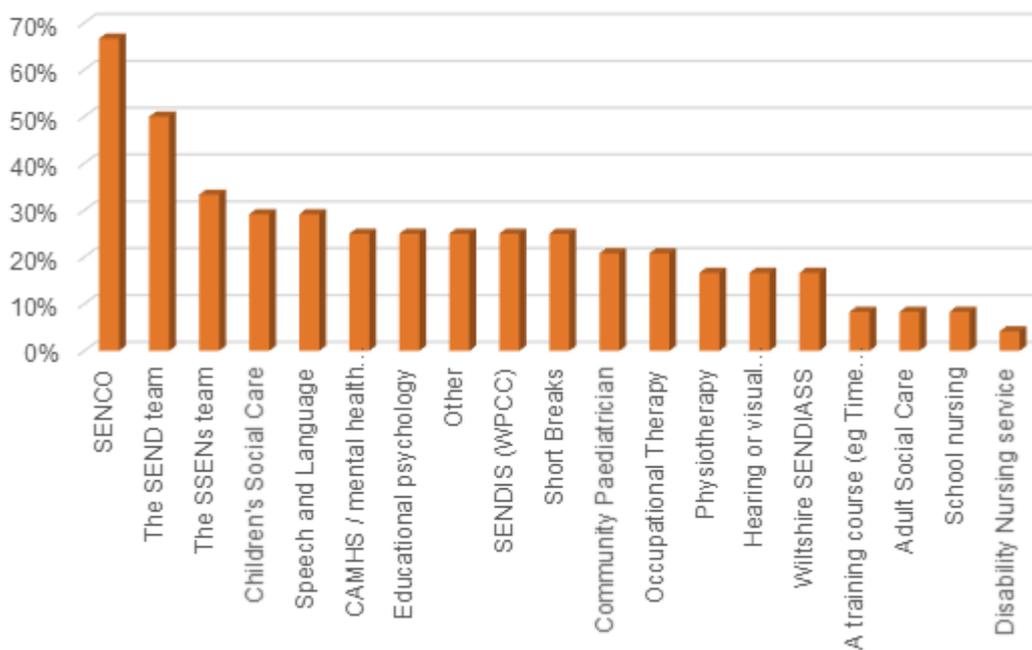
The on-line SEND Inclusion Strategy survey received twenty-four responses from parent carers, practitioners and friends or relatives. This ratio was similar to the representation in the face to face meetings.

Who responded to the survey



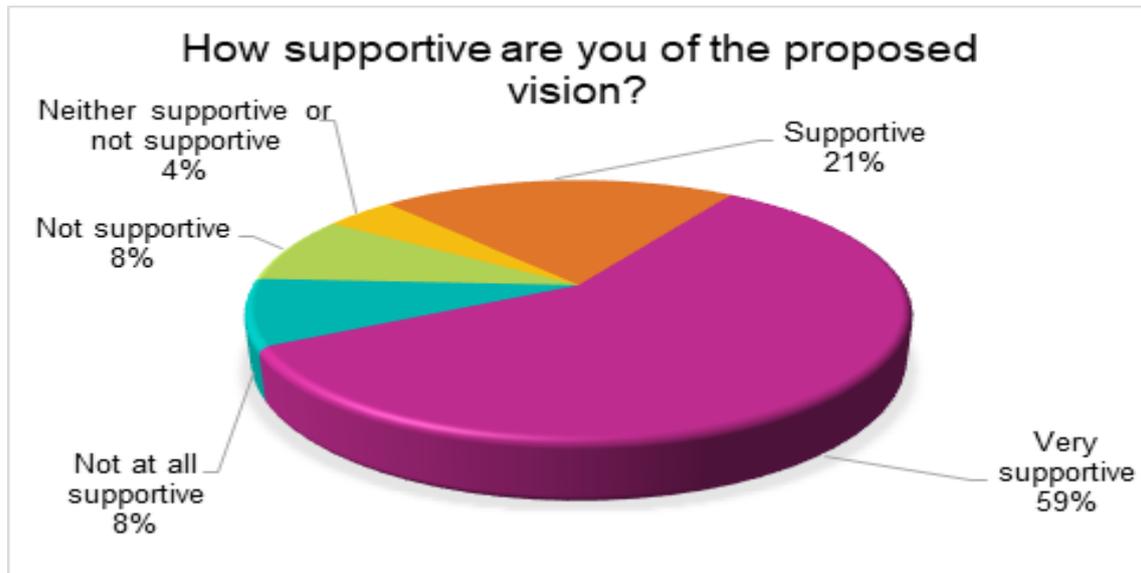
The participants had accessed a wide range of services, with School SENCO's

Services accessed / worked with over past 12 months

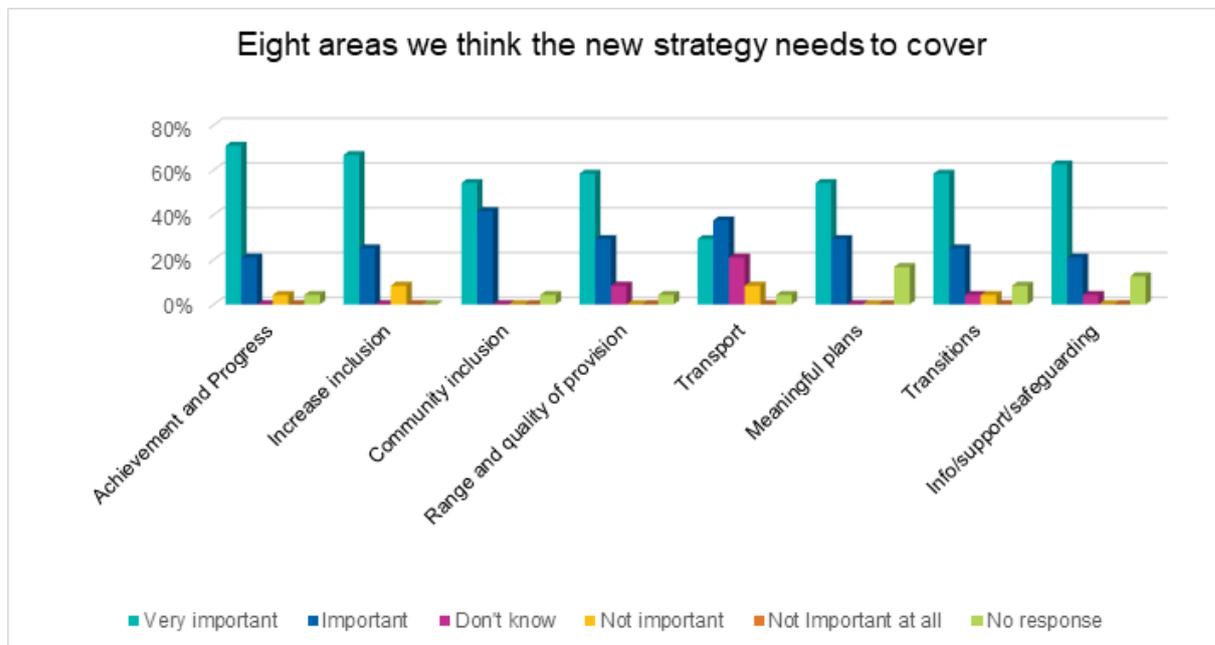


remaining one of the most used sources of support and help, followed by the Wiltshire Council's SEND and (Specialist SEN) SSENs teams.

80% of respondents reported that they were 'supportive' or 'very supportive' of the proposed vision. 16% said they were 'not supportive or 'Not at all supportive' of the proposed vision. No further information was given about the reasons.



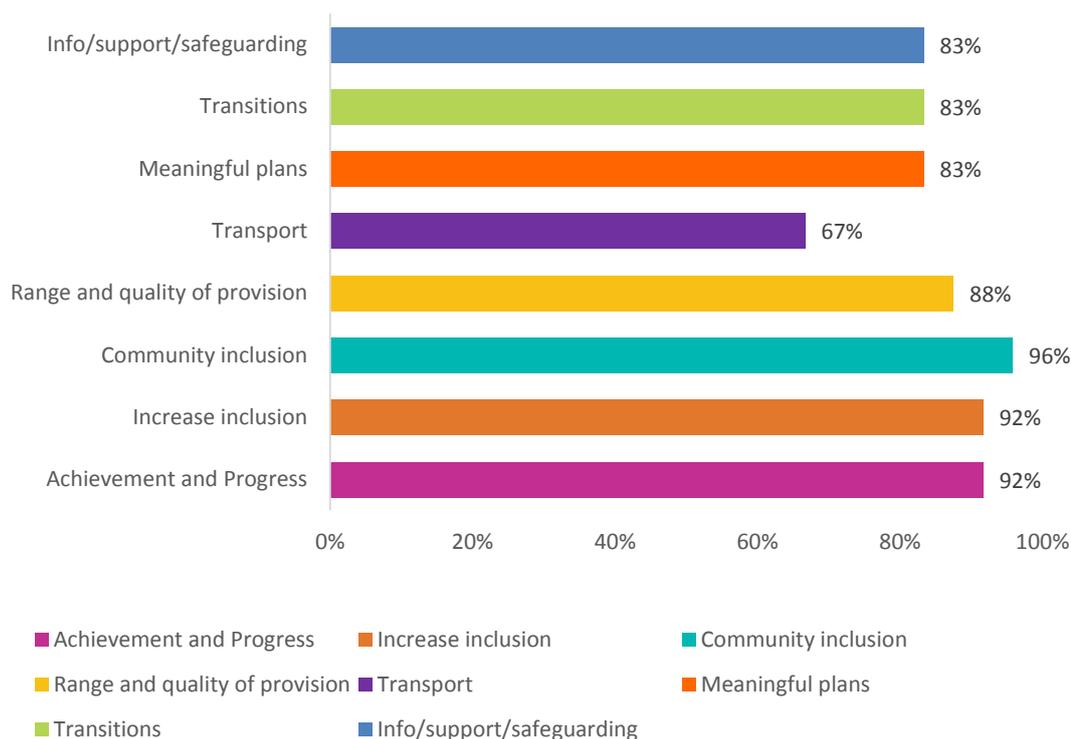
The majority of respondents thought it was 'very important' or 'important' that the areas below were covered in the strategy.



Their main priority just ahead of Progress and achievement and school inclusion was "Inclusion in the community". This reflects the discussion with the children and young people, where isolation and stigma were identified as some of their most significant concerns.

Below the chart shows the areas which rated "very important" and "important".

Eight areas we think the new strategy needs to cover



7. Monitoring the Strategy

The second consideration for the Council is how this strategy will be monitored. There has been a new SEND Local Area Board created. Members of the board include:

- Wiltshire Council (including, commissioning, the SEND service, public health and social care)
- The Clinical Commissioning Group
- Our Community Health provider – Virgin Care
- Our Children’s Mental Health provider – Oxford Health
- Wiltshire Parent Carer Council
- A representative of Wiltshire schools and early years settings
- A representative of the children’s Voluntary Sector Forum

This group will be responsible for monitoring the progress and outcomes as articulated in the strategy. The group has informally existed since the introduction of the 2014 Children and Families Act. This strategy will helpfully formalise the responsibilities and commitments of the stakeholders involved.

8. Funding & Schools Forum

There are two distinct funding streams for pupils with SEN & disability. Local authority budgets and the high needs block (HNB) of the ringfenced DfE dedicated schools grant (DSG.) There is opportunity for members to increase local authority budgets to reflect local demand pressures. Significant investment has been made in those services funded by the local authority in recent years reflecting the

Council's commitment to vulnerable pupils. Wiltshire is also investing in new Special School provision in the north, funded from borrowing on top of the SEND capital grant.

The funding for the schools, educational services and support for pupils with SEN & disability through the DSG is allocated annually by the department for education (DfE.)

Funding per pupil per local authority has been compared, out of a total of 149 local authorities, Wiltshire schools are 15th lowest funded. For high needs pupils, Wiltshire is the 105th lowest funded local authority for HN block funding per pupil which sounds reasonable until you consider that Wiltshire is funded at 12% of the highest funded local authority and would need to be multiplied by 8 to bring Wiltshire up to the top of the table and be aligned with Windsor and Maidenhead. A significant part of the current formula is based on historical pupil number snapshot at a time when Wiltshire had comparatively low numbers of pupils with "statements." The DfE will be reviewing the formula for high needs pupils for 2021-22 financial year and we anticipate a larger proportion of the national funding level which better reflects the numbers of children and young people with EHCPs in Wiltshire.

It has been nationally recognised that the level of funding for the most vulnerable pupils has been historically insufficient and included in the 2020-21 allocation is an additional £4.441m which is Wiltshire's share of the additional £680m (with £100m held centrally for adjustments) announced by the government in August 2019. Whilst this additional funding is most welcome, it does not fully address the magnitude of the cumulative pressures from previous financial years nor does it fully address the anticipated pressure for 2020-21 financial year for Wiltshire. The pressure on the 2020-21 high needs budget has been estimated at £14.4 million. This reflects both current year and 2020-21 demand increases.

The Department for Education has recently consulted and now agreed on changing the conditions and regulations applying to the dedicated schools grant (DSG), to clarify that it is a ring-fenced specific grant, separate from the general funding of local authorities. It will also clarify that local authorities are expected to carry forward any deficits they may have on their DSG accounts, and the deficit does not have to be covered by their general reserves.

It is therefore imperative that schools and local authority officers work together in strategic partnership to ensure value from provision for pupils. Schools Forum agreed a transfer of 0.8% (£2.200 million) in 2019-20 and have agreed a 0.7% (£2.065 million) for 2020-21. The growth fund has been set at the DfE funded level which is estimated at being £1.6 million higher than Wiltshire's required level. This will create a positive variance to offset HNB pressures elsewhere. A new working group, reporting to the SEND Inclusion Board, comprising heads and local authority officers has been set up support and challenge the programme of transformational work, to develop mainstream inclusion, ensure core processes are in place and expand the number quality specialist placements available in Wiltshire schools. These factors are inherent in the SEND Inclusion Strategy.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

9. A verbal briefing has been provided to the chair and vice-chair of the Children's Select Committee (and open to members of the committee and members of the SEND task group). The draft strategy has been presented to:
- The SEND Local Area Board (who also have the lead on this strategy)
 - The Clinical Commissioning Group Board
 - The FACT Board
 - The regional school's meetings
 - WPCC
 - And is scheduled to go to the Health and Wellbeing Board in early April 2020.

Safeguarding Implications

10. The implementation of this strategy will continue to prioritise the safeguarding needs of children and young people with SEND. Stakeholders particularly established a number of principles for the way the strategy is implemented and one of those is to keep children/young people safe, but with a particular focus on how we can enable children and young people and their families to take risks which take forward their wellbeing in safe ways.

Public Health Implications

11. The wellbeing and health of our children and young people with SEND is clearly at the heart of this strategy. The local area partnership, through the SEND Inclusion board, will be working together to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND enabling them to be confident members of their communities.

This should both maintain our commitments within public health as well as the wider commitments within the Wiltshire business plan (2017 – 27), but more importantly, building on our commitment to partnership, genuinely enable our children and young people with SEND to thrive in our communities.

Procurement Implications

12. There are no direct implications for procurement although a number of the intended projects will involve procuring services. This will be taken through appropriate processes as required by the council Part 10 Procurement and Contract Rules.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

13. A review of equalities impact has been taken forward for this strategy, but each project will also need to assess the impact as they are progressed. Overall the impact is positive as this strategy is focused on supporting the needs of some of our most vulnerable children, young people and their families in Wiltshire.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

14. The impact of the strategy should support Wiltshire's commitment to combating the negative effects of climate change by supporting children and young people

with SEND to be part of their local community and minimising transport to access schools out of county wherever possible. Through this we hope they can also participate in all local schemes which support the 'reduce, recycle and reuse' agenda.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

15. There are no direct risks appertaining to this report, however it is essential to the wellbeing of children with SEND and the financial efficacy of our work that we put in place a plan that has full engagement and agreement of stakeholders to enable the necessary actions to be taken.

Financial Implications

16. As described in the main considerations within this report, despite additional investment, the financial challenges continue both at a local and national level. The work of the high needs block working party is key in developing a strategic approach and reducing the Council and Wiltshire schools exposure to further financial risk.

The proposed action plan activities are wide and varied and the group will both support and challenge management of these.

A series of the project or actions proposed in the strategy have a particular impact on financial recovery. These include:

Projected Recovery Plans & Savings	20-21 Forecast £M	21-22 Forecast £M	22-23 Forecast £M
Dyslexia friendly schools	-0.007	-0.050	-0.100
Inclusion and school effectiveness project	-0.800	-1.000	-1.000
ELP/RBs	-0.400	-0.400	-0.400
SEND assessment and EHCP	-1.000	-1.000	-1.000
Review of INMSS including commissioning challenge	-0.500	-0.500	-1.000
Post 16 Transition	-0.300	-0.600	-0.600
SEND AP project	-0.360	-0.360	-0.500
Digital solutions	-0.500	-1.000	-2.000
Early intervention and support project	-0.200	-0.300	-0.500
Total Estimated Working Group Savings Target	-4.067	-5.210	-7.100

Legal Implications

17. There are no specific legal implications from the implementation of this strategy although each project or area of work may have specific issues that will be appropriately considered through the business and action plans of each project.

Workforce Implications

18. There are no specific Human Resource implications in implementing this strategy, however the strategy is a commitment to a fundamental cultural

change which will lead to reviews of the SEND system and therefore at some point job descriptions and responsibilities.

Conclusions

19. The Strategy is commended for approval by Wiltshire Cabinet as part of the commitment made as a partner of the Wiltshire Local area SEND partnership.

Helean Hughes (Director - Education and Skills)

Report Author: Judith Westcott – Head of special school transformation

Date of report 23.3.2020

Appendices

The draft SEND Inclusion Strategy 2020 – 2023