

## **Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

**Date: 6th November 2019**

Wards: All wards

### **Subject: Merton's Strategy for meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN and/ or disabilities age 0-25 (2020-23) (The Merton SEND Strategy)**

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead member: Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children Services; Eleanor Stringer, Cabinet Member for Schools and Adult Education.

Contact officer: Lisa Deer, CSF Policy Officer: 3867

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#### **Recommendations:**

- A. Note the development of the strategy including consultation process and the 'Consultation Overview' (**Appendix 1**)
- B. Note the content of the 'Merton SEND Strategy version 2' (**Appendix 2**)
- C. Note the timetable for the development of the final version of the strategy, and for the sign off and adoption process.

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report provides members of the panel with information on the development of the Merton SEND Strategy 2020-23 including the consultation process and an overview of feedback from stakeholders – 'Consultation overview' (**appendix 1**).
- 1.2 It requests CYPOS members to note the content of the 'Merton SEND Strategy version 2' (**appendix 2**).
- 1.3 It also gives details of the timetable for next steps in the development of the strategy, sign off and adoption by Cabinet on 9 December (**section 5**).

## **2 DETAILS**

- 2.1 Merton's Children's Trust is developing the Merton SEND Strategy 2020-23, to set out partners' shared responsibility to deliver effective services for children, young people and families with SEN and/or disabilities – in Merton SEND is 'everyone's business. The work has been led by the local authority, the Merton Clinical Commissioning Group, and the parent carer forum Kids First, working in collaboration to drive our improvement agenda, and in partnership with partners across Merton's Children's Trust. The strategy development is being

coordinated by the multi-agency SEND Strategic Implementation Board (SSIB) and the Children and Young People's Integrated Commissioning Group, and will be reported to Merton's Children's Trust Board. The development and monitoring of the strategy's annual implementation plan will be similarly overseen.

- 2.2 The strategy is driven by statutory requirements as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 (reform for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities), the SEND code of practice 0-25 years, the Equality Act 2010 and learning from the recent joint 'local area SEND inspection' conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. It is aligned with the current Merton Autism Strategy 2018-24, and feeds into the Children and Young People's Plan 2019-23.
- 2.3 A draft version of the **strategy (version 1)** was sent out for consultation during September and October 2019 to further develop and test the vision and strategic objectives. The draft version was based on our 2019 'self-evaluation' of SEND services which was informed by a needs analysis of prevalence, outcome and 'user voice' data. The latter was taken from formal consultations with parents (High Needs review 2018), with children and young people (Children and Young People's Plan consultation 2019 and the Young Residents' survey 2019), and with children's professionals in the local authority, health and education (High Needs Review). We also gather a wealth of regular feedback that comes from close working with children and young people, parents and partners, the themes of which are fed into the draft version of the strategy.
- 2.4 The purpose of the consultation was to discuss and draw out stakeholders' key issues and concerns, and to make sure that these are addressed in the strategy 'vision', and by the strategic objectives ('we wills') set out in the strategy. Consultation on the draft version involved:
- Over 100 **parents of children with SEN and/or disabilities and professionals/ parents who work with** them, responded to the Merton SEND Strategy consultation September/ October 2019.
  - Around 70 children and young people aged from 9-18 were involved in discussion groups across six Merton primary, secondary and special schools. The children and young people involved represented those supported at SEN support, and those with an EHC plan.
  - Discussions with **parents and professionals/ staff** via a number of our regular meetings and SEND governance focus groups.
- 2.5 **Appendix one (Consultation Overview)** gives an overview of the consultation. It highlights the strategic objectives ('we wills') which the consultation process has identified as key areas of focus for children and young people, parents and professionals. It also illustrates examples of feedback themes from across the three consultations.

- 2.6 In the light of the consultation process a second version of the strategy has been produced – **see appendix 2 (Merton SEND Strategy version 2)** – which reflects key feedback themes. This is presented to CYPOS for information.
- 2.7 In summary the stakeholders who took part in the consultation have highlighted the importance of putting children, young people and families’ participation and engagement at the heart of identification, assessment and support for SEN and/or disabilities and in our overall strategic planning; continuing to promote an inclusive culture across services and the community, with access to clear information about local provision; clear information, advice and guidance for support for parents in their caring role, with a focus on early support; access to effective therapies and other support services in education settings, and a review of the impact of these; clear guidance on all points of ‘transition’ for children and young people, and effective support for those who are eligible for adult services post 18 and those who are not, to support their move into employment, independent living, community inclusion, and health.
- 2.8 A further **Merton SEND Strategy version 3** which includes: forewords from the Director of Children’s Services, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Kids First; an overarching ‘we know’ page with data and infographics; images for each section; and an updated governance chart, will be developed for sign off at the Children’s Trust Board meeting on 15 November, and its onward journey to Cabinet.

**3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

3.1 N/A

**4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

3.1 See section 2.4-2.7 and see appendix 1

**5. TIMETABLE**

3.1

SEND Strategy version 3 for sign off at Children’s Trust	15 <sup>th</sup> November meeting.
Cabinet report and Merton SEND Strategy final version onto Cabinet system	5pm 20 <sup>th</sup> November.
Merton SEND Strategy final version to LSG.	25 <sup>th</sup> November
Merton SEND Strategy final version to Cabinet.	9 <sup>th</sup> December

**6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 No specific implications from this report.

**7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 No specific implications from this report.

**8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 No specific implications from this report

**9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 No specific implications from this report.

**10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 No specific implications from this report.

**11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

**APPENDIX 1 - CONSULTATION OVERVIEW**

**APPENDIX 2 - MERTON SEND STRATEGY VERSION 2**

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 None