

Divisions Affected -

CABINET – 19 NOVEMBER 2024

Response to Council Motion on SEND: 10 September 2024

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to respond to the requests from Council as given below:**

Council calls on Cabinet to consider;

- a) More meaningfully involve young people and youth organisations throughout all policy-making processes within SEND improvement and the PAP.
- b) Any consultations or engagement with young people by this council must have a visible public follow-up to the outcomes and tangible metrics to ensure outcomes are delivered.
- c) All Council policies that affect young people, must include an impact assessment, and ensure that reasonable mitigation measures are put in place.
- d) Ensuring that where appropriate all future events, in person/online, run or funded by OCC, especially those related to the PAP, LAP, and SEND improvement, are open to appropriate young people with the attendance of their parent or carer.
- e) Launching a rapid task force for the voice of the young person and SEND users, and task them to create a framework for a Youth Forum within three months.
- f) The leader to appoint a SEND Champion from an opposition group to enable that a wider range of voices in the SEND community are able to feed into SEND improvement and services, and that such person sits on the SEND Improvement board.

Executive Summary

2. Following an inspection of the local area partnership (the local authority and integrated care board) in Summer 2023, the LAP was found to have 'systemic weaknesses'. As a result, a priority action plan (PAP) was developed to tackle the key issues raised by the inspection. The PAP was approved by the Department for Education (DfE) in December 2023. At its heart, the PAP has a commitment to making the voices of children and young people 'heard' as part of the improvement journey. Key actions have taken place to deliver on this aspiration and these are given below.

Response from Cabinet:

3. Council calls on Cabinet to consider a variety of issues as listed below. Cabinet's response is given under each item.

- a) More meaningfully involve young people and youth organisations throughout all policy-making processes within SEND improvement and the PAP.

Young people are involved in the processes within SEND improvement. In June 2024, we established a SEND youth forum. The Forum is taking the lead on the development of the young people's element of our local offer (the website which will be the main portal for all SEND information).

The forum has a place on our improvement board. In addition, young people have also attended and spoken to the Education Young People Scrutiny board meeting in an individual capacity. The Forum has met twice and a third meeting is planned for November.

We will be asking schools to use their school councils as a mechanism for involving young people and will feed back on this in due course.

- b) Any consultations or engagement with young people by this council must have a visible public follow-up to the outcomes and tangible metrics to ensure outcomes are delivered.

The voice of children and young people is central to our SEND transformation programme and is included in the Priority Action Plan. Progress is monitored by our improvement board on which young people are represented. This board includes the Department for Education and the Department of Health. The SEND transformation programme has key performance indicators and progress against targets are regularly reported.

The SEND youth forum provides a 'safe space' for young people to discuss their concerns and thoughts and to decide how to communicate their agenda to the wider children and young people population. The Forum has met twice and a third meeting is planned for November.

- c) All Council policies that affect young people, must include an impact assessment, and ensure that reasonable mitigation measures are put in place.

The SEND Youth Forum are creating a 'quality mark' which could act as the 'impact assessment' referred to here.

- d) Ensuring that where appropriate all future events, in person/online, run or funded by OCC, especially those related to the PAP, LAP, and SEND improvement, are open to appropriate young people with the attendance of their parent or carer.

If appropriate young people are invited to all events. Since they have a place on the improvement board, they are aware of events related to the PAP, LAP and SEND improvement. The Education and Young People's Scrutiny Board is open to the public and receives updates on progress against the PAP. The Young person's forum and their collective approach was discussed at Scrutiny. Young people were also in attendance at the last meeting where the PAP was discussed alongside the approach to the Youth Forum. Our SEND conversations which are online outside working hours, are open to all members of the public including young people.

- e) Launching a rapid task force for the voice of the young person and SEND users, and task them to create a framework for a Youth Forum within three months.

The SEND Youth Forum is in place and has representation on the improvement board. It has met twice and a further meeting is planned for November. We would want to use this group to assess whether an additional forum, such as a rapid task force, is necessary given that a Forum has been in place since June 2024.

- f) The leader to appoint a SEND Champion from an opposition group to enable that a wider range of voices in the SEND community are able to feed into SEND improvement and services, and that such person sits on the SEND Improvement board.

Cllr Gregory was appointed as SEND lead member in Autumn 2023 and is on the SEND improvement board. An opposition councillor will be appointed as SEND champion and will be on the improvement Board. The Board includes school representatives, health and social care representatives, parent/carer representatives and young people alongside senior leaders and elected members.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

4. The involvement of children and young people our transformation work will support our meeting of the following corporate priorities:
- Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.

- Support carers and the social care system.

In particular, working with the Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum will ensure the voices of carers are heard and embedded in our transformation work. The key purpose of our SEND transformation is to tackle inequalities and to priorities the health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND, their families and their communities.

Financial Implications

5. There are no additional financial implications to support this response. The SEND transformation work is supported by our work on the Delivering Better Value programme as agreed by the Department for Education.

Legal Implications

6. The Council has responsibilities as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 with regard to children and young people with special educational needs and disabled children and young people.

The SEND Code of Practice provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations. It relates to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabled children and young people. A 'young person' in this context is a person over compulsory school age and under 25.

The actions and responsibilities set out in this report are compliant with the Council's statutory duties and the statutory guidance.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer. Anita.Bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

7. There are no staffing implications in relation to the actions proposed in this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

8. The SEND transformation programme which is overseen by the SEND Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB) has at its core the importance of ensuring good outcomes for children and young people with SEND, their families and their communities.

Sustainability Implications

9. There are no sustainability implications in relation to the actions proposed in this report.

Risk Management

10. Progress against actions in the Priority Action Plan is monitored monthly along with consideration of key risks and mitigation measures. These are reported monthly into the Council's corporate risk management log.

NAME Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services.

[SLT Member]

Annex: NONE

Background papers: NONE

[Other Documents:] NONE

Contact Officer: Kate Reynolds, Deputy Director of Education

October 2024