



Doncaster Council

17th March 2022

To the Chair and Members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Panel

An Update on the Special Educational Needs Strategy

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Lani-Mae Ball Portfolio Lead for Education, Skills & Young People Cllr Rachel Blake Portfolio holder for Children's Social Care, Communities and Equalities	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Panel is asked to consider the presentation provided at the meeting. This presentation outlines the refreshed Special Education Needs Strategy, the 6 priorities which underpin it alongside the progress made over the last 2 years in its implementation. The presentation also sets out the key challenges currently faced regarding the demand around Special Educational Needs services and High Needs funding. The presentation is designed to provide information and context for panel members to facilitate discussions around the current demand and the strategic proposals.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. The report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Panel is asked to consider the information provided in the presentation that will be delivered at the meeting.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Reviewing such issues ensures the Panel is responding to important issues, which ultimately have an impact on some of the most vulnerable children and young people and their families across the borough.

BACKGROUND

5. The SEND Strategy was originally signed off in late 2019 by the then Inclusion Board. It was developed within both local and national policy context, including the 2014 Children and Families Act. Whilst some progress had been made on its delivery, the work has been paused since March 2020 due to the pandemic. However, we are now able to relaunch the strategy and progress with the implementation.
6. The refreshed SEND Strategy has been aligned to our local policy and strategies around localities and Education and Skills 2030.
7. It is crucial that the work to deliver the strategy is now progressed at pace as the demand for requests for Education, Health and Care Plans has increased significantly, alongside demand on special school places and high numbers of out of area placements, all which impact greatly on the Dedicated School Grant High Needs budgets.
8. In order to ensure the success of the SEND strategy, consultation, engagement and co-production is proposed with schools, settings, other education providers and wider partners.
9. Between 2017 and 2021 pupils with special educational needs in Doncaster increased by 18.4% from 6264 to 7418. This includes those at SEN support as well as those with education health and care plans.
10. There are significant demand pressures on statutory assessments for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). In the year 2016/17 there were 238 referrals for statutory assessment received, by 2020/21 this had increased to 440, an 84% increase. Whilst not all requests progress to an (EHCPs), around 60% do each year.
11. At the end of the 2018/19 financial year, Doncaster maintained a total of 1898 EHCPs, by the end of March 2021 this had increased to 2282, an increase of 20%. By the beginning of Jan 2022 this had increased to 2397 with a further 160 in the assessment process. Therefore, by the end of the financial year 2022, the number of EHCPs being maintained by Doncaster could be near 2500 another 10% increase.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REASON FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

12. There are no specific options to consider within this report. It provides an opportunity for the Panel to consider the information provided and provide feedback and comments.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

13. The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the Council's key objectives by holding decision makers to account and reviewing issues outside the remit of the Council that have an impact on the residents of the Borough.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	Implications will be covered in the presentation.
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient, and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

14. There are no risk and assumptions associated with this report.

IMPLICATIONS

15. No implications have been sought in respect of the financial, legal, health, IT, and equalities in relation to this report. Specific implications to support strategic and operational priorities would be sought at the implementation stage.

CONSULTATION

16. No specific consultation has been undertaken in respect of this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

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