


<b>Report to:</b>	People Committee	<b>Date:</b>	10 October 2019
<b>Report title:</b>	Update on the Written Statement of Action		
<b>Report from:</b>	Nick Ireland, Strategic Director of People Directorate		
<b>Ward/Areas affected:</b>	Borough Wide		
<b>Chair of Committee /Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Marian James		
<b>Author(s)/Contact Number(s):</b>	Fiona Phelps, Assistant Director, Education and SEND (07849 079412)		
<b>Corporate Plan Priorities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Being Active</li> <li>● Making Informed Choices</li> <li>● Living Well Independently</li> <li>● Keeping People Safe</li> </ul>		
<b>Open/Exempt:</b>	Open		
<b>Signed:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	26 September 2019

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Local Area's co-produced vision is that, "We are collectively ambitious for our children. Together we want to provide them with the best chances to achieve their best outcomes in life, whatever their starting point, and to prepare them effectively for adulthood". Our children and young people with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND), and their families, are at the centre of Sutton's ambition to ensure that its residents can make informed choices about their lives, to stay active, to live well independently and to stay safe.
- 1.2 A significant opportunity to realise this ambition was provided by Sutton's Local Area SEND inspection, carried out jointly by Ofsted and CQC (Care Quality Commission, the independent regulator of health and social care services in England) between 22 and 26 January 2018. The subsequent Written Statement of Action (WSOA), agreed by Ofsted in July 2018, identified actions and priorities which would develop the Local Area's ability to identify and meet needs as well as improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Sutton.
- 1.3 The WSOA has therefore been in place for over a year now, and through the collaborative and constructive efforts of many different stakeholders working together, most of the activity required from the WSOA action has been successfully completed. The foundations for longer term, systemic change are continuing to be embedded, and the impact of these foundations is

beginning to be seen. The longer our area-wide work continues, the deeper and firmer these foundations will be.

- 1.4 It is now possible to summarise the progress that has taken place over the past year prior to the revisit (reinspection) to which all boroughs with a WSOA are subject; Sutton's Local Area revisit is due at some point before February 2020. A draft Self Evaluation is being developed, based on the evidence collected over the year of the WSOA. It is being shaped through contributions and reviews from Local Area stakeholder groups. It will not become 'final' as such until the Local Area is notified of the Revisit. In the meantime, a summary has been developed to demonstrate the extent of the actions undertaken and completed.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note the actions, achievements and outputs of the Written Statement of Action as summarised at Appendix A.
- 2.2 To endorse the intention to continue the SEND improvement journey across the Local Area.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 As noted in previous updates for the People Committee, the SEND Area Inspection reviewed how well the Local Area was fulfilling its responsibilities for young people with SEND. The 'local area' is not limited to the Local Authority; it refers to a wide range of providers such as the Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Sutton Public Health, NHS England and education settings/schools.
- 3.2 Following the inspection, the WSOA was agreed as appropriate; the 'fit for purpose' letter from Ofsted was published in July 2018 and is on the Local Offer Website.
- 3.3 The WSOA comprises 27 major initiatives, involving Local Authority services, Health services, Cognus, the Parent Carer Forum, young people and education settings. As a result, to improve the Area's ability to meet SEND, extensive formative and developmental work with partners and stakeholders across the Local Area has taken place. All intended actions are now completed where the timescales have allowed, and those that are not are the basis for our future longer-term work. The scope and outcomes of this area-wide change initiative is detailed in Appendix A.
- 3.4 Quarterly monitoring visits from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE) note the Local Area's good progress: the most recent one, from September 2019, states: "The local area has continued to take forward the actions in the WSoA as part of a broader strategic, cultural and operational improvement programme. The profile of SEND has been raised amongst leaders and stakeholders and there is more consensus about the issues and priorities. However, it is evident that the scale of the change has been significant."

## **4. Issues**

- 4.1 All boroughs with a WSOA are 're-visited' (re-inspected) within 18 months of the agreement to the WSAO. Sutton's Local Area scheduled re-visit is due to take place before February 2020. As noted in the 'Handbook for inspecting local areas in England under section 20 of the Children

Act 2004' (April 2016 updated April 2019), the "sole purpose of the re-visit is to determine whether the local area has made sufficient progress in addressing the areas of significant weakness detailed by the WSOA".

- 4.2 Over the course of the year and now in preparation for the re-visit, the Local Area has been recording actions, activities, data, outputs and outcomes and has developed an Evidence Bank to support and underpin this. The evidence shows that, 14 months on, the change has been significant. All 27 actions have been addressed, and whilst some have required far more work than originally estimated, the majority of the resulting developments are complete and have become 'business as usual'. Leaders throughout the Local Area are now engaged in the SEND improvement journey, and communication about SEND is a priority at the highest level. Approaches and practice in services and education settings has changed, and there is now far greater co-ownership of ways to meet needs and joint decision-making. The High Needs Block funding review has been completed, and there has been a common agreement - again at all levels - that the issues raised are the right ones: the Sutton Education Partnership of Local Authority, Cognus and Education Leaders across all phases and sectors is therefore now taking forward the required work.
- 4.3 The overarching narrative, the Self Evaluation, will be comprised and written on the basis of that information and as captured within the Evidence Bank. It is essential that the Local Area 'knows itself': the final Self Evaluation will have been developed by the members of the Children and Families Act Executive Board, the WSOA Implementation Group, Heads' Forums, partners from the range of education settings, Governors, CCG partners, the Sutton Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) and other stakeholders. An initial draft has been shared with all partners including the Primary and Secondary Heads' Forums, the Sutton Parent Carer Forum, Chairs of Governors, Elected Members and all those invited to the Stocktake Day. However the Self Evaluation will not be in its final iteration until the Local Area is notified of the Revisit.
- 4.4 Therefore, as the Self Evaluation is still in development, an overview of the activities and outputs that support the Self Assessment is at Appendix A. Although the Self Evaluation will be in development until the point of the revisit, the latest version can be brought to the next People Committee, and should the announcement of the revisit occur before then, the latest version will be circulated to all stakeholders, including Elected Members, for final comment.
- 4.5 One of the key developments for the coming year that signifies a major step change in response to the Local Area's first area of weakness is the formation and work of the Sutton Education Partnership (SEP). The SEP is a partnership between Sutton education settings, the Local Authority and Cognus - a formal, jointly-developed partnership that has not existed in recent years. The SEP framework is intended to be instigated where there is significant strategic and operational change that requires collaboration and joint understanding between the Local Authority and education settings for a successful outcome. This therefore represents a significant milestone in the development of an effective and 'joined-up' Local Area.
- 4.6 The first task for the SEP is to take forward the recommendations of the High Needs Block Review: this review was commissioned by the Local Authority in conjunction with Schools Forum as part of the WSOA. The Executive Summary has been distributed to all stakeholder groups (along with the full report which contains specific details of individual schools' contexts) and is published on the Local Offer website

([https://www.sutton.gov.uk/downloads/download/1013/executive\\_summary\\_of\\_high\\_needs\\_block\\_review](https://www.sutton.gov.uk/downloads/download/1013/executive_summary_of_high_needs_block_review)).

- 4.7 The High Needs Block review was a key activity within the WSOA: the use of the High Needs Block funding is critical to addressing SEND, but doing so effectively and efficiently within the national and local contexts is currently a challenge for most boroughs. Therefore the extensive and detailed review and its recommendations have been widely welcomed by the Council and Local Area stakeholders.
- 4.8 To support even greater collaboration between the Authority and education settings, the Local Authority has engaged a Sutton Headteacher, Rebecca Allott, Executive Principal/CEO of Cheam Academies Network to co-lead on the operational work of the Review for 1.5 days a week during the academic year.
- 4.9 The Draft Terms of Reference were distributed to key stakeholders prior to the commencement of the work; the final Terms, as agreed by the SEP, are on the Local Offer Website ([https://www.sutton.gov.uk/downloads/download/1026/sutton\\_education\\_partnership\\_terms\\_of\\_reference](https://www.sutton.gov.uk/downloads/download/1026/sutton_education_partnership_terms_of_reference)). The operational work required is being driven by the Education Operational Group (EOG) and will be overseen by the Education Leadership Group (ELG). The ELG comprises representatives from all education phases and sectors, together with the Director of People Services, the Assistant Director for Education and SEND, the Services Director for Cognus and the LBS Senior Finance Business Partner. Preparatory work took place over the summer with the Consultant Headteacher, the Chair of the ELG, officers from LBS and Peter Gray, the consultant and author of the review. The ELG has now met and the overall Programme of Work for the year has been developed, although this will be subject to change depending on the progress of the EOG and workstreams. Nevertheless, there is a strong commitment from all representatives to move at a pace where possible and appropriate.

## **5. Options Considered**

- 5.1 The WSOA is a requirement from Ofsted / CQC and the activities resulting from this are part of the Local Area's overall improvement plan for SEND. This report is for information as requested by the People Committee. Therefore there are no options to consider as part of this report.

## **6. Impacts and Implications**

### Financial

- 6.1 The implementation of the Written Statement of Action is being financially supported in 2019/20 by investment of up to £248k from the transformation fund. Other costs will be contained within existing council budgets for 2019/20 or provided by partner organisations.

### Legal

- 6.2 New duties on local areas regarding provision for children and young people with special educational needs are contained in the Children and Families Act 2014, which came into force in September 2014. These include the replacement of statements of special educational needs with Education Health and Care Plans ('EHC plans'). An EHC plan is one document which sets

out a child's or young person's special educational needs; the outcomes sought for him or her; the special educational provision required by him or her; and any health care provision and/or social care provision reasonably required by the learning difficulties and disabilities which result in him or her having special educational needs. There are new general statutory duties under the Children and Families Act to support and involve children and young people; to promote the integration of educational provision and training provision with health care provision and social care provision; to make joint commissioning arrangements and to cooperate with partners; and to keep education and care provision in the authority's area under review and consider the extent to which it is sufficient.

- 6.3 The Minister of State for Children and Families has tasked Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) with inspecting local areas on their effectiveness in fulfilling the new duties. These inspections are carried out under section 20 of the Children Act 2004.

## 7. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendix letter	Title
A	Written Statement of Action Highlight Report

Background documents
None

Audit Trail		
Version	Final	Date: 26 September 2019
Consultation with other officers		
Finance	Yes	Sue Holmes
Legal	Yes	Sarah Willis
Other Officers:	No	N/A
Equality Impact Assessment required?	No	N/A

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