

SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan & Summary Report

Committee considering report:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date of Committee:	11 th September 2025
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Date Head of Service agreed report: (for Corporate Board)	29 th August 2025
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	3 rd September 2025
Report Author:	Hannah Geddert; SEND Strategy Officer
Forward Plan Ref:	

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee with an update on the ongoing implementation of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy. It includes the current multi-agency delivery plan, developed and owned by partners across the local area partnership, and this accompanying summary report. The delivery of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy is overseen by the multi-agency SEND Strategic Improvement Board.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee note the updates provided within the SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan and this summary report, and consider providing further oversight, challenge, and support in relation to areas identified as requiring particular attention.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	There are no direct financial implications for this report. However, it should be noted that some actions within the delivery plan have required business cases/applications for alternative funding streams, given Delivering Better Value (DBV) funding has now concluded. In addition, some actions will continue to be considered and progressed in line with the Council's budget setting processes to ensure alignment with available resources.

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Human Resource:	There are no significant HR implications arising directly from this report however, delivery of some actions, particularly within Priority 6 – Preparation for Adulthood, require HR involvement particularly in relation to our ambitions to offer a broader menu of work-related learning opportunities and to become an employer offering Supported Internship placements. This input will need to be carefully managed in light of existing HR capacity.			
Legal:	N/A			
Risk Management:	N/A			
Property:	N/A			
Policy:	<p><u>Local Policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Berkshire SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2024-29 • West Berkshire Council Strategy 2023-27 <p><u>National Policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Equality Act 2010 • The Children & Families Act 2014 • The SEND Code of Practice 2015 			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				

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A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			<p>The send & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan is expected to have a positive impact on equality. Its focus is on improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND, many of whom may experience disadvantage and barriers to participation in education, employment and community life. By driving forward actions that strengthen inclusion, improve access to services, and widen opportunities for independence and achievement, the plan, alongside the overall strategy, seeks to reduce inequalities.</p> <p>This report does not present a decision for consideration; it is provided for information only. Any specific actions within the plan continue to be assessed for equality impacts as they are developed and implemented.</p>
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	X			<p>The delivery plan is likely to have a positive impact on service users with protected characteristics, particularly children and young people with disabilities and their families. The actions aim to increase access to appropriate education support transitions into adulthood, and improve participation in community and employment opportunities. These measures will help address existing disparities and contribute to improved life chances.</p>
Environmental Impact:				N/A
Health Impact:	X			<p>The SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan is expected to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND. Many actions in the plan aim to improve access to appropriate support, reduce barriers to participation, and promote social and physical wellbeing. The delivery of the plan is supported through close collaboration with health partners, ensuring that interventions are coordinated and aligned with wider health and care priorities.</p>

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ICT Impact:				N/A
Digital Services Impact:				N/A
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			<p><u>Priority 1: Services we are proud of</u> The SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan supports the development and delivery of high-quality, responsive services for children and young people with SEND, ensuring that families have confidence in the support available.</p> <p><u>Priority 2: A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all</u> By improving access to education, work-related learning, and transition support, the SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan promotes equality of opportunity and helps reduce disadvantage for children and young people with SEND, contributing to a fairer and more inclusive West Berkshire.</p>
Core Business:				N/A
Data Impact:				N/A
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>The SEND & Inclusion Strategy delivery plan for 2025-2026 was developed through a co-production approach. Each priority area held meetings with members of its respective priority group to finalise the plan, reviewing the actions that had been completed, determining which actions should carry forward into the current year's plan, and agreeing any new actions required to achieve the strategic priorities.</p> <p>Each priority group includes a wide range of stakeholders from across the local area partnership, including representatives from the Parent/Carer Forum (PCF), SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice & Support Service), health services and local schools, ensuring that the plan reflects the views and expertise of all relevant partners.</p> <p>The plan also incorporates learning from recent external reviews, including the OFSTED SEND Thematic Review and the audit conducted by the Early Years DfE Advisor.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan sets out a comprehensive programme of actions aligned to six strategic priorities and a series of enabling factors, all aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It is a multi-agency delivery plan, with actions owned by partners from across the local area partnership. The plan is overseen by the multi-agency SEND Strategic Improvement Board and incorporates outstanding actions from the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme.
- 4.2 A governance structure is in place and has recently been strengthened through the introduction of a Priority Lead meeting. Previously, each priority group was chaired by the SEND Strategy Officer. However, it was agreed that chairing of these meetings would be more effective if managed by senior colleagues from relevant service areas, bringing greater subject expertise and strategic oversight.
- 4.3 The newly established Priority Lead meeting will report directly to the SEND Strategic Improvement Board. The meeting cycle and reporting frequency have also been reviewed, with meetings now scheduled to take place six times per year. This allows sufficient time for progress between meetings while maintaining regular oversight.
- 4.4 To manage capacity effectively, while the delivery plan will be monitored at each meeting, lead action owners will be required to provide full updates on their actions on a termly basis using a prescribed format.
- 4.5 Completion of actions within the delivery plan is monitored via a RAG rating system. The RAG rating is as follows:

Not Started	Overdue/Unresolved Issue	Partial Completion	Started – On Track	Completed

- 4.6 A Gannt chart has also been devised to provide a clear visual overview of the delivery plan's actions, timelines, to support more effective monitoring and progress tracking. This will be introduced to the Priority Lead meeting as the meeting becomes more embedded within the governance structure.

- 4.7 To date, completion of actions in the 2025-2026 delivery plan is as follows:

	Priority 1 – Early Years	Priority 2 – Early Intervention	Priority 3 – Inclusion	Priority 4 – Developing Local Specialist Provision & Support	Priority 5 – Alternative Provision	Priority 6 – Preparation for Adulthood	Enablers	Total
Not Started	1	3	1	4	9	3	0	21
Overdue/Unresolved Issue	1	0	3	1	0	2	5	12
Partial Completion	2	1	7	3	1	3	3	20
Started – On Track	7	8	14	14	0	11	5	59
Completed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	11	12	25	22	10	19	13	112

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- 4.8 Significant progress has been made across all six priorities including, increased childcare places, mental health support in schools, expanded specialist provision, and steps towards better preparation for adulthood.
- 4.9 A number of actions currently RAG rated as 'not started' or 'overdue/unresolved issue' are linked to areas where delivery responsibility sits with partners or are impacted by limited capacity and resourcing within the system. Key challenges remain, particularly around capacity for Annual Reviews, lack of a SEND Youth Forum and formal youth voice mechanism, delays associated with commissioning capacity, and concerns over system's ability to accurately record data to support strategic decision-making.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 This report provides an update on delivery of the actions within the SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan 2025-2026. Over half of the identified actions (53%) have been RAG rated as started and on track.
- 5.2 The delivery of actions within the SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan is monitored through the established governance framework, including the respective priority groups and the newly introduced Priority Lead meeting. This meeting will report into the SEND Strategic Improvement Board to provide enhanced oversight and strategic alignment.
- 5.3 To support effective progress tracking, the frequency of meetings and reporting has been reviewed. Meetings will now be held six times per year, allowing sufficient time for work to advance between sessions. Lead action owners are required to provide comprehensive updates on their actions on a termly basis, ensuring accountability while managing capacity across the system.
- 5.4 This report outlines key progress highlights and identifies areas of concern in the delivery of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy.

Background

- 5.5 This section introduces a summary of progress highlights and areas of concern in the delivery of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy delivery plan 2025-2026. It is intended to support scrutiny and oversight by providing a clear overview of what is working well and where further attention is required.
- 5.6 Progress highlights are as follows:

5.6.1 Priority 1: Early Years

- Over 120 new childcare places have been created, and five schools are preparing to open nurseries.
- 9 Parent Champion Volunteers are trained and actively supporting the community. Further recruitment is underway with a targeted focus on those who have experience of accessing Early Help and Family Hubs.
- 86.6% uptake of 2-year health visitor checks in 2024-2025; exceeding the 85% target.

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- A best practice guidance document has been implemented for transitions, with footprint visits planned to monitor understanding and implementation.
- ECAT training uptake has increased from 5 to 33 settings.

5.6.2 Priority 2: Early Intervention

- Phase 1 of the Whole School Mental Health Project showed improved attendance and reduced suspensions in participating schools. Phase 2 has been redesigned and funding allocated for delivery.
- A structured plan is in place for all SEN Managers, EHC Coordinators, and SEN Officers to complete the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) online training. This training will be embedded into the induction process for new staff and once fully established within the SEND Team, will be extended to a wider group of professionals.
- The Neurodevelopmental transformation work is progressing and being monitored under the Berkshire Neurodivergence Transformation Board.

5.6.3 Priority 3: Inclusion

- Review of banding is being co-produced with schools; testing is in progress.
- Dyslexia Friendly Award will be launched in September 2025.
- Relational Inclusion Policy has been implemented as part of Phase 1 of the Whole School Mental Health Project. Phase 1 schools have offered to 'buddy' with Phase 2 schools.
- An Interim Annual Review Officer has been appointed with an initial focus on Year 6 and Year 11 transitions.

5.6.4 Priority's 4 & 5: Developing Local Specialist Provision (P4) & Support and Strengthening Alternative Provision (P5)

- The expansion of The Castle School by four additional classrooms (to accommodate 32 additional pupils) is on track for practical completion by December 2025, with pupils expected to start in January 2026.
- Data analysis is informing decisions around sufficiency, with updates shared regularly with the Executive.
- Visits to Short Breaks providers are underway, in co-production with the West Berkshire Parent/Carer Forum. The data from this exercise will inform the competitive tender process for Short Break provision when the Commissioning Team are in post.
- An SLA is being developed with iCollege to ensure our Alternative Provision remains appropriate.

5.6.5 Priority 6: Preparation for Adulthood

- Corporate Board has endorsed the idea of the Council becoming an employer offering Supported Internship placements. This is due to be shared with SLT, with one or two placements anticipated to begin in September 2026. This will go some way to the Council becoming a Level 3 Disability Confident Employer.

- A Berkshire wide SEND Employment Forum is in the early stages of development which will bring together Local Authorities, education providers and employers to improve outcomes for young people with SEND across Berkshire

5.6.6 Enablers

- The digitisation of EHCPs has been explored with a preferred option identified and a business case in development. This will streamline the process for families, schools and professionals.
- A co-production meeting is scheduled for September 2025 to initiate the development of a West Berkshire Quality Assurance Framework. Insights gathered from the Courageous Conversation on EHCP quality, held in May 2025, will inform the creation of key West Berkshire principles that will serve as the foundation for the framework.

5.7 Alongside the achievements, there remain some key challenges and risks which are detailed below:

5.7.1 Capacity Constraints

- Annual Reviews:
 - A lack of capacity has impacted the completion of Annual Reviews, resulting in the Local Authority experiencing challenges in meeting our statutory duties and creating risks around compliance, timely updating of provision, and effective forward planning for children and young people. While one agency worker has been appointed to focus initially on Year 6 and Year 11 transition reviews, capacity remains limited and there is a significant risk that other cohorts will not receive statutory reviews and timely amendments to their EHCPs.
- SEND Youth Forum:
 - Currently, there's no SEND Youth Forum in place, which means young people with SEND don't have a dedicated space to share their views or influence decisions that affect them. Without a clear way to gather youth voice, there's a risk that services and strategies won't fully reflect their real-life experiences or needs—and it becomes harder to show genuine co-production.
 - Several options have been considered. The Participation Team in Children's Social Care isn't able to support SEND-specific work at the moment, although young people who are looked after and have SEND needs will still be heard through existing channels. The SENDIASS contract is due to be retendered, and those involved in that process have been informed, especially since SENDIASS previously ran the youth forum before it was brought in-house.

5.7.2 Commissioning

- Several actions remain on hold/cannot progress further until the commissioning team is fully recruited and the successful candidates have started in post. Areas affected include:
 - Development and oversight of Alternative Provision
 - Short Breaks competitive tender

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- Supporting the mobilisation of the newly procured Children and Adult's Supported Employment Service
- Progressing cost-effective solutions to increase local capacity; including in independent provisions.

5.7.3 Data & Systems

- Concerns regarding data accuracy have delayed continued development of the SEND data dashboard. Dedicated data cleansing days have been scheduled to resolve these issues and to ensure reliable reporting.
- Although a strategic review of the CapitaONE/MRI system has been undertaken, concerns remain over its ability to capture the full range of information required by teams in education, leading to an ongoing reliance on spreadsheets which hampers oversight and limits effective monitoring.

5.7.4 Governance & Oversight

- Delays with the SEND data dashboard developments are impacting the work of the Data Scrutiny and Accountability group, limiting timely and accurate information to inform the SEND Strategic Improvement Board's decision-making.
- The Local Offer is currently in development due to limitations in families' access to clear, accurate, and up-to-date information and posing a potential risk in the event of a SEND Inspection. Although co-production activity is planned for October 2025, a Head of SEND is required to provide strategic oversight of these developments and ensure they are effectively addressed.

Proposals

- 5.8 This report is for information only and does not present new proposals for decision. It summarises progress made in delivering the SEND & Inclusion Strategy and highlights areas requiring continued oversight and support. The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee are invited to note the updates and consider how it can continue to support delivery, particularly in relation to identified challenges such as capacity constraints, commissioning delays, and improvements required to systems and data.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 As this report is for information and not seeking a decision, no alternative options are proposed. However, the delivery plan has been developed through a co-production approach, with multiple options and actions considered by each priority group. Where challenges have been identified, alternative approaches have been explored. These areas remain under review as part of ongoing strategic oversight.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan continues to drive forward improvements across six strategic priorities and supporting enablers. While significant progress has been made, there are key areas that require continued attention, including Annual Review capacity, youth voice mechanisms, commissioning, systems and data. The

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Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and maintain oversight of these areas to ensure continued progress.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029

8.2 Appendix B – MASTER SEND & Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan August 2025

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: X

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval ☐

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council ☐

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position ☐

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months ☐

Item is Urgent Key Decision ☐

Report is to note only ☐

Wards affected: All

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Document Control

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