



**Subject Heading:**

**Strategic Review and Planning of  
Special Education Provision**

**Report Author:**

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Manager**

**Eligibility to vote:**

**N/A**

### SUMMARY

This item is to receive a report on the process for developing a strategic review of special education provision in Havering. The review intends to refresh the existing SEND Strategy, incorporating the Post-16 Strategy, into a coherent, future-focussed document which will support planning for provision for the borough over the coming years.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schools Funding Forum notes the report.

### REPORT DETAIL

#### **Background**

Over the past few years, the government has introduced a number of changes to how children and young people with special educational needs, as well as their families, are supported. The main change has been through the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014. The Act set out to ensure that local authorities work in partnership with health, social care, schools, colleges and other key partners to ensure that children, young people and their families receive joined-up, high quality and appropriate services.

Last year, the government announced proposals to consult on how funding is given to local authorities and schools to support children and young people with SEND. As part of this, local authorities are required to refresh their SEND Strategy to

ensure that it is up to date, reflects current and predicted trends, and provides clarity on how the authority expects different levels of needs to be met and where its current and future gaps in provision are.

### **Havering's vision**

In Havering we are committed to developing the most inclusive communities which are welcoming and supportive of all. Our aspiration is that all our children and young people have the best opportunities to achieve and fulfil their potential. For children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) we want them to enjoy their education in the most inclusive environment possible and be supported in participating as fully as they can in the lives of their schools and local community.

Local authorities, schools and other education providers have important responsibilities for children and young people with SEN and disabilities and for those who need alternative provision, as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

We recognise that for these responsibilities to be discharged most effectively we have a duty to further develop our strong partnership working with all of our education providers (in particular mainstream and special schools, and alternative provision). We want to work with schools and colleges to develop a shared understanding of where different types of need are best met, and how we can support that development. This vision and shared understanding will be a key part of our published local offer of SEN provision and services.

### **Refreshing the SEND Strategy**

In refreshing our strategy, we will be involving parents and young people to ensure that the range and quality of provision reflects the needs and aspirations of children and young people in the area.

The Children and Families Act is clear that, when considering any reorganisation of provision, decision makers must be clear how they are satisfied that the proposed alternative arrangements will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with SEN. This aim will be the common thread throughout the refresh.

The Act sets out clear expectations for reviewing the services and provision. Local authorities must work with key partners, including a range of education providers. The partners who are required to co-operate with the local authority include:

- the governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies and free schools in the local authority's area;
- the proprietors of non-maintained special schools, and of independent special schools and special post-16 institutions which have been included on the section 41 list of institutions approved by the Secretary of State, and which are in the local authority's area or provide education or training for children and young people in the area;
- the governing bodies of further education colleges and sixth form colleges that are in the local authority's area or are attended or likely to be attended by young people from their area;

- any other person (other than a school or college) that makes special educational provision for children or young people for whom the local authority is responsible, including providers of relevant early education.

We will also include in the review, provision outside the local area that is likely to be used by Havering children and young people. We will also include relevant regional and national specialist provision, such as provision for children and young people with low-incidence and more complex SEND.

The refresh will consider:

- Data on the range of SEND in the area, recent trends and likely changes in the future (for example arising from demographic growth)
- Evidence for how effectively the current pattern of special educational provision meets needs in the area (Including feedback from parents and young people on the local offer (including the quality of existing provision and any gaps)
- Evidence for how effectively the current pattern of special educational provision prepares children and young people for adult life (particularly employment and/or higher education; independent living; participation in society; and being as healthy as possible)
- The range of special educational needs which would generally be met by mainstream providers, including early years settings, mainstream schools and academies, and post-16 institutions (further education and sixth form colleges), and the way in which these institutions access the specialist training and workforce development they need
- The range of SEN and disabilities which would generally be met by specialist providers, including special units or resourced provision in mainstream schools, special schools and academies, non-maintained and independent special schools and special post-16 institutions
- The range of SEN and disabilities which would generally be met by highly specialised providers, including those operating at a regional or national level such as residential special schools, non-maintained and independent special schools and special post-16 institutions
- How best to address any gaps in provision identified by the review
- How best to allocate resources to deliver this provision.

### **Outcomes of the Strategy Refresh**

It is envisaged that three key outcomes will emerge from these reviews:

1. A strategic plan for high needs provision that makes sure there is an attractive offer for parents and young people which will meet the needs of future cohorts, at a cost that is sustainable. This might include:
  - i. measures to support mainstream schools in meeting the SEN of a wider range of pupils, for example through workforce training or clear routes to access specialist expertise
  - ii. changes to the focus of existing specialist places, to cater for different or more complex needs
  - iii. the creation or expansion of specialist provision attached to mainstream schools (special units or additionally resourced provision)
  - iv. identification of the need to create or expand special schools, and

- v. strategic engagement with specialist providers in the non-maintained and independent sector, to make sure that the places they are offering reflect the changing needs of children and young people.
2. More effective collaboration between local authorities to secure efficient delivery of:
    - i. SEND assessment and support services
    - ii. Specialist provision for more complex needs
    - iii. More standardised approaches to high needs top-up funding that facilitate better cost control and reductions in bureaucracy.
  3. Better value for money in special schools and other specialist institutions. For example, where an institution is operating with empty places, the review may secure better value through a change to commissioning; or where a school is not as efficient as it could be, the review may support better procurement of utilities, benchmarking of costs and other measures that release more resources that can be focused on improving the quality of provision and outcomes.