Barnet Children's Partnership Board Report

Title: SEND & Alternative Provision Action Plan

Meeting Date: 29 February 2024.

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Service/ Dept.: Education and Learning

Report to be Presented By: Karen Flanagan

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Children and Families Act¹ (CFA) was enacted in 2014. Part 3 of the Act relates to children and young people in England with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). The aims of the reforms were for children's needs to be identified earlier; families to be more involved in decisions affecting them; education, health and social care services to be better integrated; and support to remain in place up to the age of 25 where appropriate.
- 1.2 Since then, there has been much criticism about the system from families, Councils and wider professionals^{2.}
- 1.3 In response to the widespread concerns and findings, the DfE published a Green Paper in March 2022 'SEND Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time³. A year later in March 2023 the DfE published its SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan⁴.
- 1.4 Following the publication of the SEND and AP Improvement Plan the DfE asked for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from high performing councils,

¹ Children and Families Act 2014 (legislation.gov.uk)

² National Audit Office report in SEND 2019. <u>https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-</u>

<u>content/uploads/2019/09/Support-for-pupils-with-special-education-needs.pdf</u> Local area SEND inspections: one year on', Ofsted and Care Quality Commission, October 2017;

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrensservices-and-skills

Ofsted Annual Report 2019/20: education, children's services and skills', Ofsted, December 2020 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrensservices-and-skills

Inquiry by the House of Commons Select Committee October 2019 https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201919/cmselect/cmeduc/20/2002.htm

³ SEND Review - right support, right place, right time (publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁴ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan (publishing.service.gov.uk)

including Barnet, to lead a partnership in each of the 9 DfE regions (appendix 1).

1.5. Barnet were selected to be the lead LA for the London region, our partner boroughs are Camden, Enfield and Islington. Across the partnership we will receive funding of £6.3m across the 4 LA partnership over two years. This also includes £500k for the Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC) programme which is only being delivered in Barnet.

1.6 Areas of testing include:

Enablers	Ordinarily Available Provision	EHC Plan Reform	Standards & Commissioning
National and Local Inclusion Dashboards	AP Three-Tier Service	EHCP Reform: Standardised EHCP template and advice templates (TBC)	National Standards
Local SEND and AP Partnerships and Local Area Inclusion Plans	Promotion of AP Specialist Taskforce model	EHCP Reform: Multi Agency Panels	Bands and Tariffs
Improve Transitions in Early Years and Post-16	Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)	Advisory Tailored Lists	
	The promotion of innovation, early identification and good classroom practice	Strengthened Mediation	

- 1.7 We have secured a Change Programme Partnership (CPP) Director and established a muti agency Steering group chaired by Chris Munday, Executive Director Children & Families. We will use the funding across the partner LAs to trial the DfE proposals and tailor to each LAs needs, such as creating bespoke Alternative Provision pathways and recruiting additional staff to support earlier disagreement resolution.
- 1.8 We have issued over 20 EHCPs on the new DfE template and are working with our partner boroughs to look at the advice templates.
- 1.9 We have submitted our CPP Action Plan which has been approved.
- 1.10 Barnet already have a multi-agency panel for decision making which includes parent/carer representation to inform decision making. We have shared how we do this with wider LAs, including out of London, the most recent conversation was with Leicestershire.
- 1.11 We are currently recruiting an engagement and participation officer so we can develop the Communication Strategy across the partner LAs
- 1.12 We have attended all DfE information sessions and fed back our views including those of Mediation and Advisory tailored lists of schools.

1.13 Our CPP steering group has been established and comprises a wide variety of stakeholders and partners.

2. Ofsted and CQC Inspection arrangements.

- 2.1 From 2016 Ofsted and the CQC were commissioned to inspect local area SEND arrangements. Following a consultation about the proposals that finished in September 2022, a new inspection framework⁵ has been published and been in use since January 2023.
- 2.2 Barnet was last inspected in January 2022. It received an extremely favourable inspection outcome. The feedback letter can be found <u>here</u>.
- 2.3 The purpose of the inspection is to provide an independent, external evaluation of the effectiveness of the local area partnership's arrangements for children and young people with SEND who are educated in Alternative Provision (AP) settings and where appropriate, recommend what the local area partnership should do to improve the arrangements.
- 2.4 There is significantly greater emphasis on the experiences of children and young people with SEND, or who are educated in AP settings and their families in the new framework. Following the inspection, each local area will receive an overall judgement as well as an outcome letter that details key strengths and areas for improvement.
- 2.5 There are 3 inspection Judgements:

1: The local area partnership's arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.

2: The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.

3: There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently.

2.6 In addition to the full inspection there will also be annual engagement meetings between Ofsted and the CQC's representatives and representatives of the local area partnership to review their self-evaluation and action plan and discuss what is happening in the area, including any challenges and how leaders are addressing them.

⁵ Area SEND inspections: framework and handbook - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

3. Actions.

- 3.1 Barnet is utilising the DfE funding to implement the DfE's proposals outlined in the SEND and AP Improvement Plan, as well as developing areas that external inspection or internal evaluation has identified as requiring further improvement.
- 3.2 We are currently developing our first **Local Area Inclusion Plan (LAIP).** This document will provide a summary of key information in relation to our SEND and AP cohort and services in one overarching document. This will include data and information from across Health, Care and Education.
- 3.3 The data and information within the LAIP will help us to better understand the strengths and challenges of our Local Area so we can target our commissioning arrangements for SEND and AP services more effectively.
- 3.4 The gathering of this information is taking considerable effort and staff time; however, we are working with the Insight Team and are hoping that once we have this data, we can put more automated systems in place, so this is not so resource intensive going forward.
- 3.5 The LAIP will also include our Self Evaluation Form (SEF), which will be required ahead of any full AREA SEND and AP Inspection, as well as the annual CQC/OfSTED engagement meeting.
- 3.6 Barnet has not yet had its first annual engagement meeting, our annual DfE advisor meeting will take place on the 22 February 2024.
- 3.7 We have established our **SEND and AP Strategic Board, since** then there has been further DfE guidance with respect the Terms of Reference and its status. The DfE guidance is that the Board should report to our Health and Wellbeing Board and that it should meet six times a year. Currently the SEND and AP Strategic Board reports to the Barnet Children's Partnership Board and meets three times a year. Our next meeting is scheduled for the 20 February 2024 where this, as well as a number of key draft strategies /policies, will be discussed including the draft SEND and AP priority Areas.
- 3.8 The SEND and AP Strategic Board is currently codesigning our refreshed SEND and AP Strategy (2024-2027). This will go out to formal consultation at the end of May following the local area elections and the ending of the purdah period (appendix 2). The final strategy will be published September 2024.

- 3.9 Our next Area SEND Inspection is due in January 2027, the SEND and AP Strategy will be updated thereafter in accordance with the Inspection outcome grade.
- 3.10 As part of the early codesign phase of the SEND and AP Strategy we will be consulting on 8 key priority areas please note these will be subject to change as we continue though our codesign phase and of course following the formal consultation.

4. The draft SEND and AP Strategy Priority Areas. (Note: These are not in any particular order)

4.1 What?

We will continue to improve the educational progress, outcomes and experiences of our children with SEND and in AP, across all phases and types of institution from early years to post-16, including transitions and progress into independent living, apprenticeships, supported internships, higher education, training or employment.

How?

- Maintain our standards of attainment for all pupils with SEND so they are above the national comparators.
- Maintain our low number of children and young people with SEND that are NEET and increase the number of young people with SEND accessing supported apprenticeships/internships.
- Ensure there are appropriate curriculum pathways in our secondary schools to provide an engaging and stretching curriculum and accreditation at a range of levels for every learner irrespective of level of need including life skills.
- Learn from our partners in the CPP regions nationally and locally to coproduce clear guidance for best practice at key transition points for all SEND and vulnerable pupils and those educated in Alternative Provision.
- By coproducing an updated ordinarily available offer and increasing range of support and provision that is available.
- By ensuring independence is embedded throughout everything we do across education care, health, transport and employment.
- By coproducing an updated ordinarily available offer and increasing range of support and provision that is available.

"It is most important to me to receive high quality support and learning skills to become independent for the future".

When?

• August 2025

Evidence?

• Updated Ordinarily Available document is published.

- ELSEC training has been delivered to a minimum of 12 primary pupils, referrals for specialist SLT are slowed or reduced.
- Published expectations of early years settings, schools and post 16 providers with regard expectations around transitions, including coproducing templates, self-audits or wider supportive documentation as appropriate.

I would also like to achieve a transition into the workplace and travelling independently. I would like to learn more about independently using my money and using a bank account. (SI learner)

The school needs to be aware of supporting me through a transition to sixth form and on to University (St Michael's)

4.2 What?

Putting in place earlier intervention and support to children and young people who have health (including mental health) or development needs including those who are waiting for a diagnosis and their families.

How?

- Developing more support for children and young people whilst they are waiting for formal assessment so they 'wait well'.
- Reduce waiting times for specialist assessments and advice.
- Embedding of the universal offer in Barnet, including access to a depository of therapy support.
- Baselining and increasing take up rates of annual health checks of young people 14+ who have Learning Disability.
- Maintain or improve take up of 2 year old health checks.
- Continue to monitor the number of antenatal contacts.
- By developing further, the early intervention offer including embedding ELSEC, continuing to fund the Language Enrichment Programme, to learn from our pilot Nurture and EBSA work.
- Embedding our mental health strategy and support including I -thrive and mental health support teams in schools.
- Working with our NCL partner boroughs in the development of the Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme.
- Remaining up to date with research including the use of technology and adopting best practice wherever possible.

When?

• Baselining of take up for health checks/antenatal contacts by December 2024 and monitored annually thereafter.

- Wait times are reduced.
- Number of children accessing the 2 year old health check increases as does the offer of antenatal contact.

4.3 What?

More families feel listened to and able to participate in shaping service developments and have a greater sense of co-ownership.

How?

- Continue to ensure we have parent/carer representation at all strategic boards.
- Codesign an annual survey for parents and carers to complete so we can use their lived experience to identify gaps and improve our service.

When?

• 1st survey to take place December 2024.

Evidence?

• We will publish an annual 'you said, we did' document which will provide an update on our coproduced Local Area Inclusion Plan and show how we have listened to and acted on feedback.

4.4 What?

More young people with SEND irrespective of whether they have an EHCP or not, feel listened to, valued and seen and are respected for who they are.

How?

- Codesign an annual survey for children and young people so we can use their lived experience to identify gaps and improve our service.
- Work with education providers to ensure the arrangements for consulting young people with special educational needs about, and involving them in, their education is made explicit in their SEN information reports, that they are involved in the school's student council (or equivalent) and their achievements are celebrated.
- Make sure our young person's zone on our local offer page is updated and includes information about services in the community as well as clubs and activities opportunities outside of education.
- Ensure that all children and young people are valued and welcomed so they feel confident in being their authentic individual self.

When?

- 1st survey to take place December 2024.
- Young persons zone to be updated by December 2024.
- SEN Information reports to be reviewed and updated annually.

- We will publish an annual 'you said, we did' document which will provide an update on our coproduced Local Area Inclusion Plan and show how we have listened to and acted on feedback.
- SEN Information reports are updated by April 2025, following an annual report to the SEN Governor which focuses on pupils with SEND in terms of attainment and progress, adaptations to the curriculum and learning environment, engagement in the activities of the school (including physical activities), emotional, mental and social development and individual achievement.

 We will have reviewed and updated our '<u>things to do</u>' on our young person's zone of the Local Offer

"I would like to have my voice heard more; I would like to be asked about my support needs more often". "I would like to find out more information about local services".

"I am not currently active in the community and would like to see if there are any clubs or groups I can join"

4.5 What?

We will refine and improve our local offer as well relationships with children and young people with SEND and their families by adopting a 'family friendly' approach to processes, support and information.

How?

- We will use the Change Partnership Programme (CPP) funding to employ a dedicated early disagreement resolution officer. We will learn from this role in terms of how to better engage families at an earlier stage, to avoid the need to register an appeal to SENDT.
- We will develop a communication strategy so we can engage with our parent/carers more effectively, to ensure they are aware of our early disagreement resolution processes and their advantages.
- We will ensure transparency and timeliness of support for families and children and young people through early help and social care including short breaks.
- We will increase our understanding of the reasons for absence so we can better tailor or commission support where the need is greatest and improve the attendance of children and young people with SEND attending special schools and Alternative Provision wherever possible.
- We will further develop our support for children who are not attending due to emotional based school avoidance (EBSA).
- We will increase our materials and resources to support families who are Electively Home Educating (EHE) and make clear the duties on families where they EHE, so they can make informed choices.
- We will further improve our compliancy rates for annual reviews and maintain our high rates of compliancy for newly issued EHCPs.

When?

- Assistant Educational Psychologist dedicated to developing training to schools to better support pupils in this cohort will be in place by September 2024.
- Dedicated early resolution officer to be in place on or before 1 September 2024.

- Increased attendance rates of pupils in special schools and AP.
- Timeliness for Annual Reviews is improved.

• The number of requests for EHE for children and young people for reasons other than lifestyle choice is reduced.

The rate of appeals to SENDT which was 3.7% in 2023 – higher than the national average is reduced or the increase slowed by August 2026 and the number of hearings is reduced.

4.6 What?

Develop our Alternative Provision Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) pathways so they are in line with the three tiered approach as set out in the DfE's Improvement Plan.

How?

- We will utilise both the expertise and the funding available as part of the CPP programme to develop a three tiered approach for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. This will include in reach, short term outreach and longer term placements to prepare children and young people with SEMH needs through their transition to their next phase of education.
- We will review our pathways, decision making and criteria into and out of each pathway including those children and young people with medical needs.

When?

• By September 2025.

Evidence?

- Exclusions and Suspensions continue to be below national average.
- AP pathway and support offer reviewed and published on the Local Offer website.
- Referral processes and criteria reviewed and updated and published.

4.7 What?

There are sufficient high-quality school places in Barnet including specialist and additionally resourced provisions, from early years through to post 16 to meet current and future demand to ensure children and young people with SEND are able to access appropriate provision that is as close to home as possible.

How?

- Through the development of the Local Area Inclusion Plan we will better finesse our forecasting so we can plan in a strategic way to ensure sufficiency of need.
- We will continue to offer training and support to mainstream schools, so they are confident to meet the needs of pupils with a range of needs.
- We will establish a working party to review the curriculum offer at secondary.

When?

• To be reviewed annually as part of the LAIP updates.

- Reduction in number of children and young people placed in independent placements due to lack of capacity locally.
- Reduce the number of requests for EHE for children and young people for reasons other than lifestyle choice.
- Maintain our high rate of inclusion of pupils with SEND in in mainstream settings.

All of the above priorities need to be delivered within the funding available in the DSG High Needs Block (HNB) which needs to be monitored carefully in order to ensure continued viability of the High Needs Budget and avoid cuts in services. Alternative, more flexible, methods of funding need to be explored and there needs to be a focus on better equity of provision – being clear about those who have the highest levels of need.

5 Improvements made since our last Area SEND Inspection.

Therapy Provision

- Both the ICB and the Council have increased funding for therapy in order to:
 - address waiting times for children and young people across Speech and language Therapy (SLT), Occupation Therapy (OT) and Physiotherapy. Waiting times from referral to assessment and advice has reduced across all therapy services; and
 - enhance the universal support offered in the borough.
- The creation of a North Central London (NCL) Autism Hub to target longer waiting times across NCL, this resulted in a reduction of those waiting by around 1,000.
- Receipt of national trailblazer funding of £1m over two years to pilot Early Language and Support for Every Child (ELSEC) in Barnet. The programme will be piloted in schools in Barnet from April 2024 onwards.
- Additional investment in the form of Mental Health Support Teams in schools, the roll out of the Barnet Home Treatment Team and additional funding to the local CAMHS provider (BEH MHT) so that they can reduce waiting times.
- Put in place a new provider Whittington Health, which has seen a marked improvement in performance and levels of staff turnover. In May 2021 the percentage of vacant posts was 36%, in April 2023, the vacancy rate was reduced to 11%.
- Commissioned additional independent therapists where required.

- Commissioned additional speech and language training across schools and colleges the Language Enrichment Programme.
- Funded additional training and input for therapists from the High Needs Block as part of the Communication Sensory and Functional Skills programme.

We have Changed our equipment provider and will continue to monitor the effectiveness of this change.

Increased the number of specialist places available in ARPs and Special schools.

- We have continued to increase the numbers of commissioned places in both our special schools and mainstream ARPs including the building of a brand new all age specialist Autism school, the Windmill, in 2024 which will provide 90 places from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 5 when at capacity.
- We have also developed satellite provisions for Oakleigh Special school on the Queenswell site and a satellite site for Northway school which opened in September 2022 on the Grasvenor site.
- We opened a new secondary ARP for cognition and learning at the Friern Barnet school in September 2022, followed by a 28 place ARP for primary children with cognition and learning needs in September 2023 at Queenswell. Our existing ARPs all increased the number of pupils they could admit.
- We also built a brand new purpose built Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) for the <u>Pavilion</u> which opened in 2023.

Improved the compliancy rates for Annual reviews.

• We have invested in additional staffing to focus on annual reviews, we have increased our rates of compliance from 37% in February 2023, to 70% in February 2024.

Antenatal contact

• From September 2022, all expectant mothers have been offered an antenatal appointment. A new Public Health Nursing S75 agreement is being closely monitored.

Quality of EHCP Plans

• We continue to have a multi-agency audit including parents and carers for 10% of newly issued plans. The Barnet EHCP template was amended to include the Aspirations at the top of Section E (Outcomes) We are also trialling the DfE developed EHCP template as part of the Challenge Programme Partnership for the London region – you can find out more details with regards the DfE SEND and AP Improvement plan <u>here</u>.

Put in place online information sessions for parents and carers.

- These have comprised of two repeat sessions covering each topic, one at lunchtime and one at 6pm, to increase the number of parents and carers that can attend.
- Topics have included SEN including EHCNAs, annual reviews and phased transfer processes, all things autism and all things social care.
- We will continue with these and ensure a rolling programme of the sessions most requested from parents and carers and change the evening session from 6 to 7pm based on feedback.

6 Our Strengths

Co- production.

- We are very grateful that so many parents/carers and young people continue to give of their time to sit on strategic and operational boards such as the <u>Barnet's Childrens Partnership Board</u>, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board which shaped our <u>Mental Health</u> <u>Wellbeing Charter</u>.
- We have parent representatives on the BELS Board of Directors and of course our SEND and AP Strategic Partnership Board and the <u>Health</u> and <u>Wellbeing Board</u>.
- Parents and carers are an integral part of the interview processes for key posts such as the Director SEND and Inclusion and our Dedicated Clinical Officer (DCO).
- All relevant <u>strategies</u> and plans are codesigned and developed with parent/carers and informed by the experiences of children and young people.
- We are proud to have representatives from our <u>Barnet Parent, Carer</u> <u>Forum</u> in their roles as professionals by experience take part in our decision making processes relating to requests for Education, Health Care Needs Assessment process and those with EHCPs.

Compliancy rates for newly issued EHCPs.

• Since 2017 Barnet has maintained compliancy rates above 97% with regards the 20 week timescale for newly issued plans.

 In 2022-2023 (Jan 2023 SEN 2 census data) the percentages of EHCPs issued within the 20 week target (both including the excluding exceptional cases) remained some of the highest in England. At 97.9%, the proportion of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptional cases) was particularly high, compared to the England average of only 49.2%, placing Barnet 11th out of all 152 local authorities in England.

Attainment and progress.

- In recent years children's achievements in Barnet's schools and settings at all key stages have been among the very best in the country. Over 95% of Barnet pupils are at schools and settings which were graded good or better at their last Ofsted inspection.
- Achievement for children and young people with SEN in Barnet is strong in comparison to national at all Key Stages and children identified as requiring SEND support in Barnet made better progress between KS2 and KS4 than children nationally with no recorded SEN.
- In Barnet, 9% of EHCP pupils achieved a Good Level of Development at EYFSP in 2023. This was the highest proportion among statistical neighbours and the eighth highest in England.
- In 2023, 28% of EHCP pupils and 56% of SEN Support pupils met the year 1 phonics standard, both ranking Barnet in the top quartile of all local authorities in England.
- KS1 SEND pupil performance was strong again in 2023, with Barnet consistently ranking in the top 10 local authorities in England for EHCP pupils, and in the top 30 for SEN Support pupils. In particular, 23% of EHCP pupils reached the expected standard or higher in KS1 reading, compared to 12% across England and ranking sixth of all local authorities in England.
- Both the SEN Support and EHCP cohorts performed well at KS2, with Barnet consistently ranking in the best performing quartile of local authorities in England.
- Maths attainment was particularly strong at KS2, with 58.3% of SEN Support pupils achieving the expected or higher standard, the seventh highest rate in England.
- SEN Support and EHCP pupils also made more progress from KS1 and KS2 than their peers in Barnet's statistical neighbours and across

England, consistently ranking in the top quartile of local authorities in England.

Youth Justice

- Barnet's Youth Justice Service works with children aged between 10 and 18 years who have come into contact with the criminal justice system and supports them to help make changes in their lives, so they do not re-offend or cause further harm to the community.
- Barnet Council's Youth Justice Service has been awarded Youth Justice SEND (special educational needs and disability) Quality Lead Status with a Child First Commendation, which recognises consistently high levels of practice with children who have SEND.
- Youth Justice SEND Quality Lead Status is awarded to teams that provide evidence and case studies of improved outcomes for children in their borough achieved through effective partnership working.

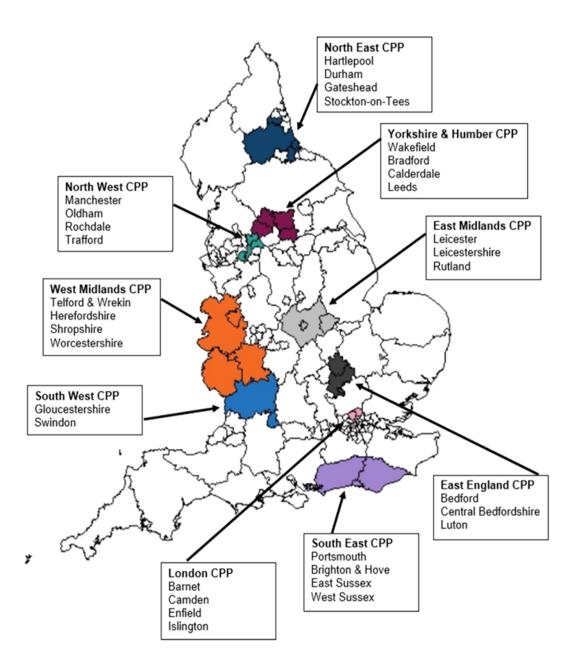
7 Consultation and Engagement.

- 3.1 Continued early co production to draft the SEND and AP Strategy overseen by the SEND and AP Strategic Board and presentations at senior strategic Board and via the overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.2 Formal consultation will be held on <u>Engage Barnet</u> and take place over May and June 2024.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations.

4.1 Children's Partnership Board to note the contents of this report, including the progress on necessary actions.

Appendix 1: The 9 DfE regions.



Appendix 2: SEND and AP Strategy – Timescales.

	 October SEND and AP Strategic Partnership Board intiall draft startgey to be discussed and co designed with partners and stakeholders , then coproduced via online collaboration
	• 20 February SEND and AP Strategic Partnership Board - draft strategy and next steps agreed
	 •29 February Children's Partnership Board - stratgey and next steps reported to the Board •7 March Children and Education Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee KF to confirm timescales for
	report clearance
	 19 March Purdah starts Draft strategy to be presented by Parent, education, health and care reps
-4	
	•11 April Children's Partnership Board
	•draft strategy to be presented by Parent, education, health and care reps
	 12 April Cabinet Forward Plan published 18 April reports must be submitted to the Clerk of the Cabinet. Cabinet members briefed at 7PM
	•26 April. All cabinet reports cleared by cabinet
	•2 May - local Elections •3 May reports and agenda for cabinet published
	•14 May Cabinet meeting
	•draft strategy to be presented by Parent, education, health and care reps
	•22 May cabinet call in expires
	•23 May start of the formal consultation
3	•18 June SEND and AP Strategic Partnership Board
	A July 2024 formal consultation and
	•4 July 2024 formal consultation ends •Consultation feedback analysed
	•25 July Children's Partnership Board
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