

Meeting: Policy Development and Decision Group (Joint Commissioning Team)

Date: 4th March 2019

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Accessibility Strategy 2017- 20

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? March 2019

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1. Proposal and Introduction

- 1.1 This is a mid-term review of Torbay's Accessibility Strategy 2017 – 2020.
- 1.2 This Accessibility Strategy 2017- 20 sets out the Local Authority (LA) strategy for ensuring that accessibility of the curriculum, the physical environment and information for disabled pupils is central to the delivery of services and provide support to schools in meeting the needs of disabled pupils and raising their attainment.
- 1.3 Ensuring help is offered at the earliest possible point, with children and young people with SEND and their parents fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve. This will help lead to better outcomes and more efficient ways of working. The LA has led the strategy and recognises that its success lies in the effectiveness of the partnership between all stakeholders.
- 1.4 The following report provides an overview of what has been achieved from the introduction of the strategy and sets out the future direction.

2. Reason for Proposal and associated financial commitments

- 2.1 The Local Authority provides advice and guidance to all supports schools (regardless of whether they are maintained schools, academy schools or free schools) to respond to individual needs of pupils and training needs of staff with a range of specialist services, commissioned services and part traded services, all listed within the original strategy. The Local Authority website and Local Offer both

provide information about the provision available to support access to the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The SEND Code of Practice includes advice on approaches to identification of need and the graduated approach to meeting identified needs.

- 2.2 This has been enhanced by the ongoing creation and publication of information and guidance pages on the Torbay Local Offer as described within the online [Torbay SENCO Handbook](#).
- 2.3 Torbay's SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) and the Torbay Parents/Carers Forum (PCF) works collaboratively in supporting the Local Authority to engage with parents and carers of pupils with disabilities to inform and develop good practice within settings.
- 2.4 This Strategy provides schools with a blank Access Plan template that schools may find useful in fulfilling their duty to have an Access Plan in place.
- 2.5 The joint commissioning of education, health and care provision for children and young people required by the Children and Families Act 2014 is leading to the development of more integrated packages of support to support children and young people with disabilities in accessing the curriculum.
- 2.6 This Strategy and the requirement for schools to have Access Plans in place and updated information on the SEN Capital Funding, including details of how to apply for Accessibility funding has been raised at termly SEMD Network meeting between the LA, school headteachers, school SEN governors and school SENCO's. It was also raised within commissioned SEND school Audits carried out in 2017.
- 2.7 The LA also carries out an annual check on SEND information published on schools websites and provides feedback to schools on their compliance with legislation to publish the following documents and links on their own school's website:
 - SEND Policy
 - [SEN Information Report](#)
 - School Access Plan / Disability Equality Scheme or similar that conforms with [Torbay's Accessibility Strategy](#)
 - Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs in School / Managing Medicines Policy that conforms with national guidance on [Statutory guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#)
 - Exclusion Policy that conforms to national guidance on [Exclusion for maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units](#)
 - Link to the [Torbay Local Offer](#)
 - Link to [SENDIASS Torbay](#)
- 2.8 Since the original Strategy was written the ability to increase local provision has been enhanced by the allocation of SEN Capital Funding via the Department for Education.
- 2.9 The LA undertook consultation from the 1st December 2017 until 31st January 2018. [Consultation results](#) were published on the Torbay Local Offer on 14th March, in line with requirements, and responses received were used to help inform decision making on how the funding was allocated.

- 2.10 Torbay's Special Provision (SEN) Capital Funding allocation was agreed to be used to fund:
- An enhanced provision at The Spires for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder
 - Additional provision to support students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties at a mainstream secondary school (Paignton Community and Sports Academy)
 - Expansion of Medical Tuition Services to include Post 16 provision
 - Provision of Accessibility Funding Grants for mainstream schools, private/voluntary and early years providers to bid for – there were 9 bids approved during 2018-19, summary details and images can be seen on the [SEN Capital Funding Local Offer webpage](#).
- 2.11 The DfE have recently announced increases to the original SEN Capital Funding, therefore, additional consultation is now required. This consultation is due to take place from mid-April 2019 to nearing the end of May 2019 in line with requirements for it to be published along with the revised plan by 31st May 2019.
- 2.12 This proactive work to increase capacity for schools to be more inclusive and accessible for children and young people with SEND will relieve pressure on the High needs block funding.
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3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

That the Elected Mayor be recommended:

- 3.1 That the progress made on the Accessibility Strategy be noted.
- 3.2 That further consultation be carried out on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Capital funding and the Assistant Director, Education, Learning and Skills, in consultation with the Executive Lead for Children, be given delegated authority to make appropriate revisions to Torbay's Special Provision Plan by 31 May 2019.

Background papers

1. [Original Accessibility Strategy](#) – this web link takes you directly to the published Accessibility Strategy.
2. [SEN Capital Funding](#) – this web link takes you Torbay's Local Offer web page in relation to the SEN Capital Funding, including summary details of projects undertaken using accessibility funding awarded to schools.
3. [Torbay's Special Provision Plan \(2018-2021\)](#) – this web link takes you directly to Torbay's published plan. This is due to be updated by 31st March 2019 to show progress against the original funds allocated and to be revised and republished by 31st May 2019, to include additional consultation, in relation to the additional funds allocated in May 2018 and December 2018.
4. [Special Provision Capital Fund Guidance](#) – this web link takes you directly to published national guidance.