

Record of Decisions

Proposal for a Locality Model to Support our Children in Torbay who have additional needs including those with Special Educational Needs. Improving Inclusivity and Support.

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 20 August 2024

Decision

1. that consultation on a Locality Model be undertaken by the Local Area Partnership (as set out at Appendix 1 to the submitted report) and the outcome of the consultation, together with recommendations on the new proposed Locality Model for Higher Needs and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) be presented to a future Cabinet meeting; and
2. that Cabinet notes that the Locality Model provides the opportunity to ensure that the MySpace Building at Parkfield is utilised to provide maximum benefit for children and young people in Torbay, through a vibrant and active use of the site at all times. That in this respect the Chief Executive be instructed to work with community and voluntary sector partners to develop a proposal to be presented to the Cabinet at a future meeting, taking into account the Local Model proposals.

Reason for the Decision

The proposed Locality Model would repair the current fragmentation within the education and SEND system to bring all stakeholders within communities together to bring about the required improvements for children, young people and their families.

Furthermore, the proposal for a Locality Model would enable better use of the expertise in the system by developing a way to allow families, colleagues in health, education and social care to work together.

By enabling the school and SEND system to develop into a community-based approach, Torbay would be reducing the need for families and their children to wait to receive a statutory Education Health and Care Plan or a medical diagnosis before any support or specialist provision could be offered. This would enable early intervention to be at the forefront of support for the young residents of Torbay which were maintained in their own local communities.

The Cabinet wishes to consult on the proposed Locality Model.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on 3 September 2024 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

In 2021, a joint inspection between Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) found that Torbay's systems work in silos and do not promote collaboration easily. In addition, they found

that parents felt they had to 'fight' for support through an Education, Health and Care Plan and wait for a specialist assessment or diagnosis. Since 2021, a huge amount of improvement work had been happening across the local area, however the impact had been limited for parents and their children.

Following a full Needs Analysis and Review of the Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) provision within Torbay, alongside the increasing demand for specialist education support, it was proposed to consult on the implementation of a Locality Model across the area, in order to bring services together to support the children and young people of Torbay in their local community, reduce the requirement for an Education Health and Care Plan to receive support and therefore reduce the wait that families were experiencing in receiving the support that their children needed to thrive.

A Locality Model would see whole communities coming together to support the children within their local area. Torbay's SEND provision would become a needs-led approach, focusing on the needs of children and young people within each local area, and allowing local stakeholders to make decisions on how the children and young people's needs could best be met.

At the meeting, Councillor Bye proposed and Councillor Tyerman seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

The options considered were:

Option 1: The current system and processes could remain the same within Torbay with no changes. This option comes with a number of disadvantages, mainly being that children and young people would continue to experience long waits for the support required, family's distrust in the education and SEND system would continue to grow and the pressures on the budgets would continue to increase. This would pose a high risk in any forthcoming Ofsted Inspection (expected towards the end of 2024) as the Local Authority was not taking action to address systemic failures blocking impact for children and young people with SEND.

Option 2: The proposed option which was a transformative change in supporting additional needs within Torbay. Such transformative change had been implemented in other Local Authorities who had been experiencing the same challenges, the model had brought positive changes to the experiences of the children, young people and their families. This model would also align with the Government's aspirations to enhance the inclusivity and provision within mainstream schools and to focus on children and young people receiving the right support, in the right place, at the right time in their own local communities.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

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23 August 2024

Signed: _____
Deputy Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: 23 August 2024