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| <b>Item No.</b>                    | <b>Classification:</b><br>Open | <b>Date:</b><br>30 June 2015                          | <b>Meeting Name:</b><br>Children's Services Scrutiny Committee |
| <b>Report title:</b>               |                                | Update on the joint all age Autism Strategy 2016-2021 |  |
| <b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b> |                                | All   |  |
| <b>From:</b>                       |                                | Director of Adult Social Care                         |  |

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That Scrutiny note the actions taken since February to progress this work.
2. That Scrutiny note the revised consultation timetable.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. Over the past 18 months, Southwark Council's Children's and Adults' Department has been developing an all age Autism Spectrum Disorder (autism) strategy in partnership with Southwark CCG. This has involved:
  - Talking to professionals and organisations who support people with autism and/or their families as well as children, young people and adults with autism and their families;
  - Reviewing the diagnostic pathway for both adults and children to identify the strengths and weaknesses in both;
  - Establishing a multi-agency steering group to guide the work and review the feedback
4. Since Scrutiny last received updates on this work in February, the following actions have contributed to the development of the draft strategy:
  - An adults' Autism Self Assessment Framework has been submitted to the Department of Health. This assessment reviewed Southwark's achievements against Think Autism – Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives, the strategy for adults with autism in England.
  - Council officers and parents took part in an event facilitated by London Councils and In Control to review the roles of colleges to support the Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND) reforms agenda.
  - Regular meetings and events with parents of children and young people (supported by the Parent Carer Council) have taken place to continue to map gaps in services and parent's needs.
  - Council officers presented on the developments to date of local SEND reforms and personal budgets to 14 other London boroughs at an event facilitated by London Councils.
  - Southwark's Parent Carer Council held their annual general meeting which included updates and information to parents on the SEND reforms including the planned autism strategy.
  - A Friends, Relationships and Community workshop was held with

professionals, parents and young people with autism and SEND to identify the current gaps/ issues to living a normal life.

- Council offers have taken part in local and sub-regional and regional discussions to provide feed back on the Department of Health's green paper "No Voice Unheard, No Right Ignored – a consultation for people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health".
- Council officers took part in a planning meeting facilitated by the National Housing Federation to identify the actions needed to increase the availability of supported housing for people with autism and/ or learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges services.
- A SEND provider fair was held for parents and young people to meet with the organisations offering activities, enabling them to understand the range of services available. Council officers were in attendance to discuss the local offer and SEND reforms (including the autism strategy development).
- 'Developing a Pathway for Good Health' workshop with professionals and parents to identify the current gaps/ issues for young people with SEND (including autism) having the right support to live healthily.
- The National Autistic Society commissioned to write the autism strategy. They have attended numerous briefings and meetings to collate and collect the information generated to develop the draft strategy.
- The Institute for Public Care (IPC) have been commissioned to run workshops on reviewing the adult pathway of support for people with autism. These will form part of the consultation process

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

5. Autism is a lifelong developmental disorder, which affects the way in which the brain processes information and how a person communicates and interacts with others and the world around them. It is the collective term used for a group of complex disorders, including childhood autism and Asperger syndrome. Increasingly, emphasis is changing from specifying the individual disorder within the spectrum to giving a single diagnosis of autism. This diagnostic approach focuses on identifying the full range of each person's particular needs and how these affect their life.
6. As a spectrum condition, autism affects people in a range of ways and to differing degrees of severity. Some are able to lead relatively independent lives while others need a lifetime of specialist support. The impact of their condition on their families and carers varies accordingly.

### **Council wide focus**

7. The work on developing this draft strategy has been led by the Children's and Adults' department (in partnership with Southwark CCG). Given the majority of people with autism will not receive direct support from this department, it is important that this strategy is finalised in partnership with all of the council's departments, enabling us to properly understand the needs of the council as a whole in meeting the needs of people with autism and supporting their wellbeing as Southwark residents.
8. To achieve this, the consultation will include engagement with other council departments, including attending team meetings and holding facilitated events. Staff will be given examples of how autism impacts on people's lives and

supported to identify any support they may need or changes to practice that may better meet the needs of people with autism. Examples of actions taken by other boroughs include:

- Training on understanding autism and ways of improving communication with people with autism for all front line council staff
  - Dedicated staff member in each housing office with more specialist knowledge of autism to support the staff team
  - Planned appointments made at the start or end of the day to reduce anxiety for people with autism.
9. Adjustments to improve how we work that can better support people with autism are unlikely to be costly, but will greatly improve the outcomes for people with autism in the borough and have been evidenced to reduce the cost to social care and health services.<sup>1</sup>
10. To ensure that there is the sufficient authority given to the final scrutiny document and action plan, it will be ratified by cabinet, thereby ensuring the document has a council wide focus.

### **Consultation Process**

11. During development of the strategy, the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and the National Autistic Society (NAS). NDTi have helped facilitate a number of workshops and events to look at how well we support people with autism move from childhood into adulthood. The National Autistic Society has helped review and incorporate the feedback and information collected to date into the draft strategy. They will also facilitate a number of events during the consultation period. Both organisations have shared national good practice to help identify how to improve the pathways of support in Southwark.
12. The National Autistic Society will lead on the development of the final strategy and consultation documents, drawing together all work done to date, as well as incorporating national experiences and good practice.
13. A formal consultation process is now proposed that will:
- Identify how well the draft strategy reflects the information we have gathered so far;
  - Ensure that the improvements and changes that need to be made are properly captured
  - Check that the key actions we think we need to take over the next five years are the right ones
14. The consultation will focus on:
- Engagement with children, young people and adults with autism as well as the organisations that support them - engagement to date has had a focus on practitioners and parents
  - Identifying how to strengthen adult diagnosis and support pathway - significant work has been done in the past 12 months to explore the feasibility of

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<sup>1</sup> National Autistic Society research 2013

establishing an adult diagnosis team. There will be no new team established, however, the mapping and gap analysis work carried out needs to be the starting point for this area of work. The process also needs to be in line with pathway mapping across Adult Social Care (ASC) that is currently being carried out by the IPC.

- Identifying the actions needed to improve the children's diagnosis and support pathway - substantial mapping with professionals and parents has already taken place and again, this work done needs to be properly captured and lead the discussions in the consultation.
- Learning from national good practice
- Expanding the focus to all council departments – our education department supports a significant proportion of children with autism via the delegated SEND budget or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. Social care only supports a small number (currently less than 10% of children with a statement, with adult social care only in contact with less than 60 people). However, given 1% of population has autism, all other council departments will have significant contact with people with autism.

### Strategy Consultation and Development Timetable:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| June 2015           | Cabinet member agreement of draft strategy and consultation process  |
|                     | Lifelong pathway mapping in line with work already underway in adult social care ( <i>building on work already done around the strategy</i> )  |
|                     | Events led by the NDTi as part of the Preparing for Adulthood workstream in the SEND reform programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment masterclass (including local school staff)</li> <li>• Developing the 19-25 pathway (including education, employment and housing)</li> </ul> |
| July 2015           | IDM Joint Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Strategy published and consultation can be implemented  |
| July – October 2015 | Formal consultation (12 weeks)   |
| w/c 19 October 2015 | Autism Strategy Group meeting to review consultation feedback and impact on final strategy document  |
| 21 October 2015     | Consultation outcome and final draft strategy and action plan presented to the LD Partnership Board  |
| w/c 26 October 2015 | Final documents completed – strategy; consultation analysis and action plan  |
| November 2015       | Final documents agreed by CCG Commissioning Strategy Group and Integrated Governance and Performance Committee   |
| December 2015       | Cabinet agree final Strategy and action plan   |

15. The Learning Disability Partnership Board will review achievements against the action plan on a quarterly basis. There will be two updates of the strategy (2018 and 2020) that will also be consulted on.

## **Policy implications**

16. The work to finalise this strategy needs to align with other areas of work in the department, including the SEND reforms in response to the Children's and Families Act 2014 and access to Personal Budgets (where applicable).
17. The strategic aims support the Council's Fairer Future Promises by focussing on helping people with autism to access the full range of services, activities and resources available in the borough (equal access to opportunities and promoting choice and control).
18. As a strategy that applies to all ages and both the Council and CCG, close inspection must be given to the strategy's action plan to ensure it aligns with all department's objectives and policies. By having the Cabinet agree the final strategy, we can ensure that all departmental objectives are properly considered.

## **Community impact statement**

19. The strategy and action plan will affect people across the borough from all equality groups, with a particular focus on disability, gender and age. However, the aim of the strategy is to improve access to diagnosis and support. The intention is to improve the life outcomes achieved by residents with autism, thereby increasing the independence, inclusion and wellbeing of these equality groups.
20. A full equality impact assessment will be carried out as part of the analysis of feedback from this consultation, which will inform the final strategy and action plan.

## **Resource implications**

21. Existing staff resources within the children's and adults' commissioning team will oversee and co-ordinate the consultation process. Support will also be given by NAS (facilitation of some workshops; final strategy development), NDTi (facilitation of sessions reviewing pathways and support for young adults); and IPC (facilitation of sessions to review adult diagnostic and support pathway).
22. There are likely to be some resource implications that arise from this strategy. The most likely one will be training and development for staff across the council and CCG. Any recommendation for investment will need to be made within the context of both organisation's restricted finances, as well as the benefits that will be gained (and the potential impact these will have on future use of services).

## **Consultation**

23. As stated earlier in this report, considerable engagement has taken place with the families of people with autism, professionals who support people with autism and young people with autism over the past 18 months. This has taken the form of questionnaires; face to face interviews; focus groups and consultation events. The information gathered has contributed to the development of the draft strategy that will be consulted on.
24. This report seeks authority to undertake a 12 week formal consultation on the draft autism strategy and action plan.

## APPENDICES

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## AUDIT TRAIL

*This section must be included in all reports.*

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|--|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Lead Officer</b>  | Jay Stickland, Director of Adult Social Care |                          |
| <b>Report Author</b>   | Peta Smith, Commissioning Manager            |                          |
| <b>Version</b>   | final  |                          |
| <b>Dated</b>   | 18 June, 2015                                |                          |
| <b>Key Decision?</b>   | Yes  |                          |
| <b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>              |  |                          |
| <b>Officer Title</b>   | <b>Comments Sought</b>                       | <b>Comments Included</b> |
| Director of Legal Services   | No   | No                       |
| Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services                                 | No   | No                       |
| List other officers here   |  |                          |
| <b>Cabinet Member</b>  | Yes/No                                       | Yes/No                   |
| <b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team/Community Council/Scrutiny Team</b> |  |                          |