

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**COMMITTEE AND DATE: Health and Well Being Board 09.12.21**

**TITLE: Autism Pre-engagement consultation**

**REPORT OF: Director of Adult Social Care**

## **PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

### **1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

**1.1 “Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive, communicate and interact with others, although it is important to recognise that there are differing opinions on this and not all autistic people see themselves as disabled. With an estimated 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK – approximately 1% of the population – most people probably know someone who is autistic. In addition, there are an estimated 3 million family members and carers of autistic people in the UK” – National Autistic Society.**

1.2 Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people. Autism varies widely and is often referred to as a spectrum condition, because of the range of ways it can impact on people and the different level of support they may need across their lives.

1.3 Some autistic people will need very little or no support in their everyday lives while others may need high levels of care, such as 24-hour support in residential care. People may need help with a range of things, from forming friendships, coping at school, managing at work, or being able to get out and about in the community.

1.4 We want to create a borough that truly understands and includes autistic people in all aspects of life; one in which autistic people of all ages, and backgrounds have equal opportunities to play a full part in their communities and to have better access to the services they need throughout their lives. This is our vision to make life fundamentally better for autistic people, their families and carers and we are determined to make it happen.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 Recognise the importance of the development of an Autism Strategy to support the community and wider partner services in the borough to create an inclusive borough for autistic people.**

**2.2 Note the contents of the report.**

**2.3 Support the development and embedding of the All Age Autism Partnership Board.**

**3. IMPACT OF ACTION**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-operative Council priorities?	
	Yes	Ensuring every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The Autistic Community in Telford and Wrekin, their families and carers.
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	The strategy is scheduled to be implemented in Summer 2022, depending on feedback from the consultation, approval by Cabinet and we continue to be mindful of any impact from Covid.	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	<p>The budget for Adult Social Care necessitates an annual financial review and modelling of the impact of future care strategy, numbers of clients anticipated to be supported, and the unit rates estimated to be valid in the ensuing financial year(s). In addition, the Council receives income from client contributions and contributions towards the cost of care from partners e.g. the CCG.</p> <p>The financial implications of the adoption of this strategy can only be considered when the detailed action plan is produced. There will then need to be a review to determine whether these changes can be met from within the available resources of all partners.</p>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>The Autism pre-engagement consultation for development of the Strategy is required to comply with The Care Act 2014, The Autism Act 2009 and the government updated all age strategy 2021-2026.</p> <p>This is also in line with the promotion of personal well-being in care and support.</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 details protected characteristics protected from discrimination, the prevention of disadvantage to classes of individuals including those with Autism and necessary reasonable adjustments which are accounted for within this report.</p> <p>The Human Rights Act 1998; including the right to be free from discrimination, and right to family life.</p>
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp;</b>	Yes	There are opportunities relating to improved outcomes for people, sustainability and improved efficiencies through delivering on the autism strategy.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Since the government's autism strategy was published, new challenges have also emerged for autistic people, as has our understanding of the barriers people face across their lives.

We have seen the number of people identified as being autistic in inpatient mental health services increase, and now know more about the scale of the life expectancy gap for autistic people, which is we know is approximately 16 years compared to the general population.

We know the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on autistic people and their families' lives.

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **4. INFORMATION**

4.1 A programme of communication and engagement has taken place through the winter, working in partnership with Autism West Midlands, as an independent partner to support Autistic people, their families and/or carers to feed into the pre-engagement consultation.

4.2 The engagement included online and face to face sessions, in a group and/or 1:1 sessions with Autism West Midlands. The questionnaire was available online and as a hard copy. The engagement has included:

- Autistic adults
- Autistic young people
- Carers and Families
- Housing providers
- Employment services
- Voluntary and community groups
- Criminal justice
- Health services
- Community services e.g. libraries, leisure centres
- Education providers
- Social Care providers

4.3 Our focused areas for the pre-engagement questionnaire and strategy are inline with the national strategy as follows:

- improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society
- improving autistic children and young people's access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood
- supporting more autistic people into employment
- tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people
- building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
- improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems

4.4 The All age Autism Partnership Board was launched in December 2021. The Board will support the development of the Adult Strategy and support areas of priority in Childrens services ensuring clear links with wider partners and services.

**Report prepared by Amardeep Grewal – Service Delivery Manager and  
Simon Fraser – Autism Practice Lead  
Adult Social Care  
December 2021**