

Reference number: PAF/04/23

Report title: Disability Strategy	
Report to: People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Report author: Ruth Harrington, Director of ASC for Adults with Disabilities	
Date: 15 February 2023	For: Discussion
Enquiries to: Ruth Harrington, Director of ASC for Adults with Disabilities (Ruth.Harrington@essex.gov.uk) Chris Martin, Director of Strategic Commissioning and Policy for Children and Families (Chris.Martin2@essex.gov.uk) Rachel Williams, Senior Policy Advisor (Rachel.Williams@essex.gov.uk)	
County Divisions affected: All Essex.	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report introduces the draft disability strategy document that is out to public consultation, and an overview of the engagement and consultation activity that has informed it so far and invites feedback and questions on these.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To review the draft strategy document and provide feedback as part of the discussion or via the consultation process.
- 2.2. To review the process through which the strategy is being developed and take opportunity to ask any questions on this or on the content of the strategy.

3. Summary

- 3.1 People with disabilities have the right to a full life but they are often marginalised within our society. Whilst the current social care offer enables many good outcomes, we know that these aren't always consistent. Demographics and demand for services are challenging and require us to use resources efficiently and ensure sustainability within the system.
- 3.2 There is opportunity to address barriers in society and better meet what people want from their lives. The strategy document sets a clear ambition and commitment to do this. It is for the next 4 years and covers adults in Essex who have a learning disability, a physical disability or a sensory impairment.
- 3.3 Engagement with people with disabilities and the carers, providers and partners has taken place over the last few years and indicated what people want in their lives and what their strengths and challenges are. Over the past year we have undertaken more focused engagement such as surveys, 1:1 interviews and group discussion sessions. Our learning has uncovered 4 key aspirations that people with disabilities have told us are most important to them in their lives and which have formed the core of the strategy document. These are:

- 3.3.1 Meaningful relationships within a community, including with families, partners, friends, groups of people with similar interests and carers
- 3.3.2 A suitable place to live and call home, whether that is a person's own home or another accommodation that best allows their needs to be met
- 3.3.3 Ability to maintain as good health and wellbeing as possible, including financial wellbeing, and personal safety
- 3.3.4 Access to meaningful activity during the day, such as education, employment and volunteering, or other fulfilling day activities, which may include opportunities to contribute to society and the economy
- 3.4 The strategy aligns with the Everyone's Essex plan for levelling up. It links to the strategic framework set out within the Adult Social Care (ASC) business plan, contributing towards the vision of 'enabling people to live their lives to the fullest.' It also connects with related strategies such as the Carers Strategy.
- 3.5 The strategy is in accordance with the Care Act and its principles around community-based support and prevention, and the Health and Care Act and integration.
- 3.6 A 12-week public consultation is running until 23rd February, inviting feedback on the content of the strategy from all residents of Essex and particularly people with disabilities, their carers and families and those who support people with disabilities as part of their work. The consultation has been made as accessible to a wide range of needs as possible and has included in-person and online focus groups and drop-in sessions with people with disabilities. As of 31st January 2023, 139 people have been engaged in the consultation.
- 3.7 After the consultation period, the strategy will be amended with the feedback. A decision will be taken to endorse the strategy to launch in April 2023.
- 3.8 To implement the strategy, the Meaningful Lives Matter programme is already delivering and will develop its future work to deliver against the 4 key aspirations. Yet to fully address barriers and maximise outcomes for people with disabilities, we also plan to develop our work with partners across the system to enable the change that needs to happen.

4. List of Appendices

- 4.1 Draft Disability Strategy document – titled 'Meaningful Lives Matter: Equal Lives for All'
- 4.2 Engagement and consultation findings (Power Point presentation titled Disability Strategy Engagement – January 2023).
- 4.3 Equalities Comprehensive Impact Assessment (ECIA).

4.4 The online consultation (<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/rci/disability-strategy-consultation>).