
Meeting: Executive
Date: 15 September 2009
Subject: The Children and Young People's Plan
Report of: Cllr Mrs Anita Lewis - Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Summary: This report presents the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan and seeks the endorsement of the Plan by the Executive.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning

Contact Officer: Sylvia Gibson, Assistant Director, Policy, Planning and Commissioning

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Executive/Council

Key Decision Yes

Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate) Not applicable

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. that the Executive
 - (a) endorses the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan.
 - (b) recommends the adoption of the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan to Council.

Reason for Recommendations: To ensure that Central Bedfordshire Council meets its statutory duty as set out in the Children Act 2004 to co-operate with partners to produce a Children and Young People's Plan for all local services for children and young people. To meet the duty this plan is written in partnership with other agencies.

Background

1. Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 requires that all local authorities with a children's services responsibility should make arrangements to promote cooperation between the authority and relevant partners with a view to improving the well-being of children and young people in the area. The Act establishes the Local Authority as the lead and the accountable partner in such arrangements.
2. The expectation is that these arrangements, commonly known as Children's Trusts, should have been in place in all Local Authorities by the end of 2008. Central Bedfordshire Council has already made a decision to have a Children's Trust.
3. The Children and Young People's Plan is the single, statutory, strategic overarching plan for all services which directly affect children and young people in the area. It shows how all relevant partners will integrate provision to improve well-being across all five Every Child Matters outcomes and focus on specific challenges and priorities.
4. The Children and Young People's Plan should:
 - drive better local integration of children's services;
 - help strengthen local partnership arrangements;
 - describe what improvements will be achieved in the local area, and when these improvements will be delivered.
5. New legislation in the Autumn is expected to strengthen Children's Trusts by:
 - extending the range of Children's Trust partners to include maintained schools, academies, sixth form and further education colleges and Job Centre Plus;
 - giving the Children's Trust Board legal responsibility for preparing, publishing and monitoring the Children and Young People's Plan;
 - giving responsibility for implementing the Children and Young People's Plan to the Children's Trust Board Members, whose strategy for co-operation it sets out.
6. By 2010, all areas are expected to have consistent and high quality arrangements in place for prevention, early identification and early intervention in order to narrow the gaps and improve outcomes for all. It is expected that regulatory guidance due at the end of the year will require Children's Trusts to develop new Children and Young People's Plans for 2011. Currently the Children and Young People's Plan is a key plan in our constitution.

7. As Children and Young People's Plans are key in setting out an area's strategic intentions for children, young people and families and provide the basis against which local authorities and partners are inspected and assessed, the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Trust agreed that partners would develop a Children and Young People's Plan between May and August 2009. It was agreed that the plan would be in place for eighteen months so that the emerging guidance and legislation expected later in 2010 could inform the new plan that is likely to need to be published in 2011.

The Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan

8. Since April 2009, partners in the Trust have worked together to develop the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan. The Plan is attached at Appendix A.
9. The Trust has set out the following vision for children and young people in the plan (page 7):

"We want every child in Central Bedfordshire to enjoy their childhood and have the best possible start in life. We want every child to do well at school, make friends and build strong relationships with their family. By the age of 19, as young adults we want every young person to have the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success, so that they are prepared to take their full place in society as a happy, healthy, contributing and confident citizen."

10. Members of the Executive will note that partners have identified a number of cross cutting priorities (pages 9-12) which are seen as the key building blocks that the Trust will put in place to deliver the vision and priorities.
11. The cross cutting priorities state that partners will need to:
 - Improve prevention, early identification and intervention;
 - Reduce child poverty;
 - Develop a locality based approach to delivering integrated services;
 - Develop the Children's Trust;
 - Increase opportunities for children and young people to play an active part in influencing the decisions that affect their lives and well-being;
 - Develop strategic commissioning;
 - Develop an integrated workforce which is ambitious for all children and their families and expert in its practice;
 - Develop the Family and Youth Information Service; and
 - Make Equality and Diversity a priority.
12. Partners have identified a further eighteen priorities linked to the five Every Child Matters outcome areas. These are set out on pages 13-28 as follows:

Priority 1: Ensure a healthy start to life - including early access to antenatal care, reducing smoking and improving nutrition in pregnancy, promoting breastfeeding and increasing immunisation and vaccinations.

Priority 2: Ensure children and young people are able to make responsible decisions in relation to drugs, alcohol, and sexual health.

Priority 3: Promote, protect and treat the mental and emotional health of children and young people.

Priority 4: Support children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles, including reducing smoking and childhood obesity and increasing physical activity and healthy eating.

Priority 5: Transform services for disabled children.

Priority 6: Protect children and young people from harm by providing a co-ordinated and effective safeguarding process.

Priority 7: Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.

Priority 8: Reduce the incidence and impact of bullying on children and young people.

Priority 9: Transform teaching and learning and strengthen leadership to ensure that every school and early years' setting is at least good.

Priority 10: Raise achievement for all learners, particularly underachieving groups and children in vulnerable circumstances.

Priority 11: Improve engagement and enjoyment for all children and young people.

Priority 12: Develop and promote children and young people's positive contribution to communities across Central Bedfordshire.

Priority 13: Reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour.

Priority 14: Promote and provide activities and information for all children and young people and their families, ensuring that the hard to reach and those with disabilities can take part in mainstream activities.

Priority 15: Strengthen and improve relationships within families by encouraging positive parenting.

Priority 16: Develop a locality approach in reducing the number of young people Not in Employment Education or training, targeting those areas with the highest NEET levels.

Priority 17: Work with employers, colleges and schools to increase the range and quality of local training, volunteering and job opportunities.

Priority 18: Inspire our most vulnerable young people to raise their aspirations and provide integrated support, particularly to care leavers, young offenders, young carers, young people with physical and learning disabilities, gypsy and traveller children and teenage parents.

13. Information on how the plan has been developed and how children and young people were consulted, is contained in Appendices B and C.

Comments from Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14. Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the draft Children and Young People's Plan at its meeting on the 11th August, 2009. The Committee's response to the Plan is attached at Appendix D.
15. The comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been considered by partners and the plan has been amended to acknowledge the issues raised. A summary of the amendments is attached at Appendix E for information.

Conclusion and Next Steps

16. Central Bedfordshire Executive Committee is asked to endorse the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan and recommend its adoption to Council.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Children and Young People's Plan identifies a number of priorities in relation to 'Stay Safe', 'Enjoy and Achieve' and 'Be Healthy'. Included within these priorities in the plan are the relevant Local Area Agreement Priorities. The Children and Young People's Plan supports the delivery of the following Council Priorities:

- Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people
- Creating safer communities
- Promoting healthier lifestyles

Financial:

Working with partners to deliver services together in a more integrated way, with a focus on prevention and early intervention is a key driver of the plan and this will deliver efficiencies.

Identified activity is expected to be delivered within the resource envelope currently available to the Council and its partners. This will be subject to periodic review.

Legal:

The Children's Trust and the Children and Young People's Plan will enable the council and its partners to exercise the 'duty to co-operate' under section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

Risk Management:

Risk management is a key part of delivery planning for the Children and Young People's Plan and will be managed and mitigated through this process.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce to ensure the delivery of the plan is a key priority for the Council and its partners.

Equalities/Human Rights:

During the development of the plan, equalities issues and impacts were considered and included in the priorities are a number of strategic actions which identify children and young people who are not achieving, who are excluded or in vulnerable circumstances. Equality and diversity issues are a key cross cutting priority for the Children and Young People's Plan.

Community Safety:

Stay Safe is an Every Child Matters outcome and the plan will be delivering against a number of priorities to keep children and young people safe in their homes and in the community. The Central Bedfordshire Community Safety Strategy and associated strategies, including the Domestic Abuse and Alcohol strategies supports the delivery of priorities for delivering the Children and Young People's Plan.

Sustainability:

Delivering services locally is a cross cutting priority for the partners that will support our ambitions to be sustainable.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan

Appendix B - How the partners of the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Trust have developed the Plan

Appendix C – Consulting Children and Young People on the priorities for the plan

Appendix D – Response from the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan for Central Bedfordshire

Appendix E – Partners' response to Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments on the Children and Young People's Plan

Background Papers (open to public inspection):

Executive Committee Report, 25 November: Establishing a Children's Trust for Central Bedfordshire