

**Response from the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan for Central Bedfordshire**



## **1. Background**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 11 August 2009 the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Children and Young People's Plan for Central Bedfordshire with a view to:
- providing general comments on the plan and the engagement with children and young people in developing the plan;
  - commenting on the emerging priorities of the plan;
  - agreeing how the scrutiny committee wished to scrutinise the Children and Young People's Plan at future meetings.
- 1.2 The following provides a response agreed by the Chairman on behalf of the Committee in regard of those areas discussed at the meeting. This response has been presented to the Children's Trust board so as any appropriate amendments can be made prior to the CYPP being adopted. The response will also be presented to the Executive of Central Bedfordshire Council for consideration.

## **2. General Comments**

- 2.1 The foreword to the plan did not emphasise that it was a shared vision developed in partnership with the Children's Trust. The plan needed to emphasise that a partnership approach was in place to deliver the plan and that the plan was not solely the property of Central Bedfordshire Council.
- 2.2 Concerns were raised that the consultation had not adequately involved children and young people in the poorest areas of Central Bedfordshire. Whilst these concerns were raised the Committee did not feel this should prevent them agreeing the CYPP although the Children's Trust was advised to consider the importance of wide consultation when developing proposals for the annual review in 2010.
- 2.3 It needed to be ensured that an efficient programme was in place to review the plan that enabled the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide input in a timely way to officers. The Committee considered the programme for annually reviewing the CYPP and raised concerns that there might not be adequate opportunities to amend priorities or targets throughout the year.
- 2.4 The CYPP contained too much jargon, which needed to be removed if it was to be used as a public document.
- 2.5 The Plan did not contain enough stretch targets to drive improvement in the areas defined as a priority. The Children's Trust Board needed to encourage all statutory partners such as the Police and the Primary Care Trust to develop challenging measures of success that would encourage greater levels of improvement.
- 2.6 Sections detailing strategic actions and what success would look like were in many cases too vague. The CYPP lacked clear priorities and targets and there needed to be greater clarity of lead partners and those that were responsible for achieving targets so they could be held to account.

- 2.7 The Committee considered that the provision of good housing was key as a means of achieving many of the targets set out in the plan. It was important that the delivery plans, which would be developed alongside the CYPP emphasised the importance of good housing in order to achieve economic well-being targets.
- 2.8 The ability of Council services to provide early intervention was considered critical. The CYPP needed to ensure that partners worked together to enhance early intervention leading to better outcomes for children and young people.
- 2.9 The CYPP should emphasise the importance of schools providing access to facilities out of hours for community use. Ofsted inspections would require schools to show how they were linked to the local community and this could be a means of enhancing community cohesion.
- 2.10 The Committee also considered the importance of the many statutory education indicators which, although they were included in the body of the CYPP were not very prominent and were not included in the basket of Local Area Agreement indicators. The Committee agreed it would be appropriate to recommend to the Local Strategic Partnership that the Local Area Agreement indicators should make reference to the statutory education indicators and the importance of a partnership approach towards their achievement.

### **3. Emerging Priorities of the CYPP**

- 3.1 The Committee raised concerns that the priorities contained in the covering report provided by the Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Children, Families and Learning did not match those detailed in the CYPP. Members requested that officers reviewed the priorities in the plan to ensure that each of the priorities detailed in the body of the report to the Committee were included.
- 3.2 Priority 4 of the CYPP needed to emphasise the importance of providing more opportunities for children and young people to keep fit.
- 3.3 Priority 5 of the CYPP needed to emphasise the importance of short-break services and provision made available by Central Bedfordshire Council in respect of respite and palliative care. There needed to be more targets contained within this priority detailing what success in transforming services for disabled children would look like.
- 3.4 Priority 12 needed to emphasise the importance of youth clubs as a means of minimising anti-social behaviour and promoting children and young people's positive contribution to communities, particularly in areas of deprivation.
- 3.5 Priority 14 refers to developing and promoting play, leisure, sport and cultural opportunities for children and young people aged 8 to 13 years. Members felt that provision in this age band in particular needed to be strengthened and the importance of provision for physical education should be stressed.

### **4 Scrutinising the Children and Young People's Plan**

- 4.1 The Committee considered how it wished to engage in the future scrutiny of the CYPP. It was agreed that that Committee would scrutinise each of the 5 delivery areas of the plan in turn at its meetings as follows:
- 05 January 2010: Enjoy and Achieve
  - 02 February 2010: Achieve Economic Well-Being
  - 30 March 2010: Make a Positive Contribution
  - 27 April 2010: Stay Safe
  - 25 May 2010: Be Healthy
- 4.2 The purpose of each of these meetings would be to discuss in detail with partners the delivery

of the specific area of the plan. The Committee will request appropriate partners and external witnesses to attend meetings in order to consider levels of performance in relation to key priorities and provide comments to be included in the annual review of the plan.

- 4.3 The Committee agreed that whilst they would consider each area in turn they would not be prohibited from considering cross-cutting issues that were not the focus of that particular meeting. The work programme would also be flexible to enable officers to amend dates where it was felt that a particular issue required immediate attention.