
Meeting: Executive
Date: 15 March 2011
Subject: Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan (2011-2014)
Report of: Cllr Mrs Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Summary: The report presents the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan (2011-2014) and seeks Executive endorsement of the Plan.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Sylvia Gibson, Assistant Director, Learning & Strategic Commissioning (Interim)
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council
Key Decision Yes
Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in Not applicable

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Children and Young People's Plan sets out the following four high level priorities:

- Helping children and young people achieve more and transforming our relationships with schools;
- Protecting children and keeping them safe;
- Reducing child poverty and the effects for those living in poverty and improving early intervention and prevention;
- Targeting the most deprived areas and vulnerable groups to improve children's emotional and physical health.

These will support the delivery of the following Council priorities:

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

Financial:

Working with partners to deliver services in a more integrated way, with a focus on prevention and early intervention, is a key driver of the Plan which also aims to deliver efficiencies. Commissioned activities and identification of the resource envelope to deliver the plan are overseen by the Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust's Commissioning Group.

Legal:

The Children and Young People's Plan is a Council Plan and a key mechanism to enable the Council and partners to demonstrate how they are meeting the 'duty to co-operate' under section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 amended the Children Act 2004 by adding new sections. These sections came into force on or before 1 April 2010 and included The Children's Trust Board (Children and Young People's Plan) (England) Regulations 2010 SI 2010/0591. This regulation required Children's Trust Boards to prepare, consult upon, publish and review a Children and Young People's Plan.

Following the election of the Coalition Government a new regulation laid before Parliament on 2 September 2010 (SI 2010/2129) for commencement on 31 October revoked the following:

- The duty for Children's Trust Boards in England to prepare and publish a Children and Young People's Plan.

There remains nonetheless a requirement in the Children Act 2004 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 accountable partner in such arrangements. Each children's services authority in England must make arrangements to promote co-operation between:

- the authority
- each of the authority's relevant partners
- such other persons or bodies as the authority considers appropriate, being persons or bodies of any nature who exercise functions or are engaged in activities in relation to children in the authority's area.

The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the well-being of children in the authority's area relating to:

- physical and mental and emotional well-being
- protection from harm and neglect
- education, training and recreation
- the contribution made by them to society
- social and economic well-being.

Within The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 which added new sections to the Children Act 2004, there remains a requirement to establish a Children's Trust Board.

Risk Management:

Risk management is embedded in the processes of delivery planning and quarterly performance monitoring.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no staffing implications directly linked to these proposals, however maintaining a skilled workforce to ensure the delivery of the plan is a key priority for the Council and its partners.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The priorities and objectives identify children and young people who are not achieving, who are excluded or are in vulnerable circumstances. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed alongside the development of the Plan and is attached at Appendix B.

Community Safety:

Protecting children and keeping them safe is a priority in the new Children and Young People's Plan which contributes to delivering safer communities.

Sustainability:

Sustainable schools are a priority for the Transforming Learning agenda and this has been set out in the Education Vision for Central Bedfordshire.

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

- Between January and June 2010, the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had a programme in place to scrutinise the Children and Young People's Plan. This work culminated in a report with a number of recommendations and comments on 14 September 2010. The purpose of this report was to inform the development of the new Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014.
- A summary of the key comments for consideration from this report included:
 - Prioritising actions for improving school performance in particular around effective challenge of poor leadership and governance; challenge on performance; the development of a 0-19 'one-phase' approach to learning. *Challenge will be developed in line with the new provisions in the Education Bill;*
 - Developing an in-house service within upper schools to assist excluded children and draw on examples of best practice in other local authority areas. *The re-commissioning of the Pupil Referral Unit is designed to achieve this objective ; and*
 - Developing specific actions in relation to childhood obesity. *This continues to be a priority in the new plan.*

- At the Children’s Service’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2011, the draft Children and Young People’s Plan 2011-2014 was considered. The key comments noted by Members were:
 - In relation to the objective to reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour Members commented that the actions and successes were identical. *Members were advised that the Plan was work in progress. This is now updated in the Plan being presented to the Executive.*
 - The need for the use of SMART targets to identify how partners plan to achieve the reductions listed in the plan. *Targets are being developed by delivery groups in light of the new database on national targets that is being consulted on by the Government.*
 - The Committee felt that there were some contradictions within the document and asked if it could be checked. In particular this was noted in relation to the school results. *This has been checked and the report has been amended.*
- Note: * Response to the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are in italics.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (a) to endorse the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People’s Plan; and
- (b) to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People’s Plan (2011-2014).

Reason for Recommendations: To ensure that Central Bedfordshire Council meets its statutory duty as set out in the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to promote co-operation with partners to improve the well-being of children in the authority’s area.

Executive Summary

This report presents the second Children and Young People’s Plan (2011-2014) for Central Bedfordshire. Partners have indicated their support for the ongoing development of partnership working within the framework of the Children’s Trust and for a Children and Young People’s Plan. The plan has been developed following consultation with over 4,000 children, young people, parents and carers and stakeholders. Central Bedfordshire’s Executive is asked to endorse the Plan and recommend its adoption to Council.

Background

1. Central Bedfordshire’s Executive endorsed the first Children and Young People’s Plan on 15 September 2009. Partners agreed that this would be an eighteen month plan as new guidance and legislation expected in 2010 would inform a new Plan to be published by April 2011.

2. Although this new guidance and legislation were published, they have since been revoked by the Coalition Government.
3. In the light of these significant changes to the legislation around Children's Trusts and Plans, Trust Board members discussed the future of the Central Bedfordshire's Children's Trust at a Board meeting on 14 September 2010.
4. This meeting recorded that partners are supportive of the partnership arrangements continuing and that 'the emergence of the Children's Trust locally had had a transformative effect in enabling organisations to work together'. Partners agreed to the continuation of the Children's Trust and the development of the new Children and Young People's Plan to provide the framework for joint working.

Developing the Children and Young People's Plan (2011-2014)

5. Following consultation with over 4,000 children, young people, parents and carers and stakeholders, the following high level priorities were agreed by the Children's Trust Board for the Children and Young People's Plan at their meeting on 25 November 2010:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Priority 1 | Helping children and young people achieve more and transforming our relationship with schools; |
| Priority 2 | Protecting children and keeping them safe; |
| Priority 3 | Reducing child poverty and the effects for those living in poverty and improving early intervention and prevention; and |
| Priority 4 | Targeting the most deprived areas and vulnerable groups to improve children's emotional and physical health. |

6. These priorities will be delivered by focusing on the following objectives which are aligned to the above priorities as set out in the Plan:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Objective 1 | Transform teaching and learning and raise achievement for all learners including underachieving groups and children in vulnerable circumstances. |
| Objective 2 | Develop and promote children and young people's positive contribution to all communities across Central Bedfordshire so that they are able to influence the decisions that affect their lives and wellbeing. |
| Objective 3 | Protect children and young people from harm by providing a co-ordinated and effective safeguarding process. |
| Objective 4 | Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people. |
| Objective 5 | Reduce youth offending and anti-social behaviour. |

- Objective 6 Maximise opportunities for families in poverty to access employment which will have the outcome of more families working and thus reducing levels of family and child poverty.
- Objective 7 Ensure families in poverty are accessing all available financial assistance so that non-working families move from worklessness into work, in the meantime accessing appropriate benefits.
- Objective 8 To improve life chances of children and families by intervening early to prevent poor outcomes and raising educational achievements and aspirations with the outcome that children from poor households gain better qualifications to ensure their access to the labour market so that the cycle of intergenerational poverty is broken.
- Objective 9 Work with colleagues from all sectors and agencies to improve the environmental factors which exacerbate the effects of poverty and harness the resources of the third sector and services across the Council so that poor families develop healthier lifestyles to prolong life expectancy and live in an improved environment.
- Objective 10 Focus on early intervention including children's mental health services, childhood obesity, drugs and alcohol and sexual health.
- Objective 11 Transform services for disabled children.

- 7. Developing an integrated workforce which is ambitious for all children and their families and expert in its practice is a cross cutting priority in the plan. Key actions in relation to this cross cutting priority are reflected under each priority.
- 8. These priorities and objectives provide the framework for the plan which is attached at Appendix A.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 9. Further to the adoption of the Plan by Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and partner organisations will continue to work together to benefit children and young people.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Plan (2011-2014)
 Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment

Background Papers: Executive Report, 15 September 2009: The Children and Young People's Plan (2009- 2011).

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands