



Essex County Council

AGENDA ITEM 8

Report to Cabinet	Forward Plan reference number: FP/465/04/16
Date of Meeting: 17 May 2016	County Divisions affected by the decision: All Divisions
Title of report: Children and Young People's Plan 2016	
Report by Cllr Dick Madden, Cabinet Member for Adults and Children	
Responsible Director: Chris Martin, Integrated Commissioning Director (West)	
Enquiries to Clare Burrell, Head of Commissioning Vulnerable People, clare.burrell@essex.gov.uk , 03330136578, 07748623993	

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To seek Cabinet approval of the new Children and Young People's Plan for 2016 (the Plan). This document replaces the current version of the Children and Young People's Plan 2013-16; refreshed in 2015.
- 1.2. To outline the process used to develop the Plan and the next steps following approval being given.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Approve the Children and Young People's Plan 2016.

3. Background and proposal

- 3.1. The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (the Partnership) is a multi-agency body which has been established to enable partners to exercise their 'duty to co-operate' under section 10 of the Children Act 2014.
- 3.2. The Children and Young People's Plan is the key strategic multi-agency document setting out Essex's ambitions for children and young people and how agencies intend to work together to bring these about. The current Essex Children and Young People's Plan expires in 2016, having been agreed in 2013 and refreshed during 2015.
- 3.3. The Plan seeks to improve on previous plans, by reflecting the voices of children, young people and their families; prioritising added-value partnership

activity over business-as-usual single agency actions; translating the Plan into meaningful action resulting in improved outcomes and increasing accountability for implementation by increasing ownership of the Plan by the members of the Partnership.

- 3.4. The Plan has been developed over the last year based on an extensive period of consultation and engagement with the children and young people, parents and carers and the children's workforce. This work has included:
- A review of our previous Children and Young People's Plans and of other plans and strategies relevant to the children's agenda;
 - A review of other local authority plans where they have been judged by Ofsted to good or outstanding;
 - A review of the Joint Area Strategic Needs Assessment and other quantitative and qualitative data;
 - A system impact review of financial pressures and legislation;
 - Engagement with over 700 stakeholders including children, young people, parents, carers and practitioners to co-produce a meaningful plan that everyone can identify with and sign up to; and
 - A six week public consultation.
- 3.5. The outcomes of activity have resulted in the framing of five strategic priorities summarising what is important for children and young people, parents and carers and practitioners. These are:
- Stable, resilient, safe families
 - Emotionally healthy
 - Physically healthy
 - Involved and connected
 - Positive futures
- 3.6. The priorities have informed the agreement of six outcomes which are desired for all children and young people across Essex, namely:
- Children and Young People are well looked after and safe with their basic needs being met within resilient families
 - Children and Young People are emotionally healthy and make good decisions
 - Children and young people are engaged in positive activities and are physically healthy
 - Children, young people and families positively support each other within their communities
 - Children and young people achieve in good quality education, training and work opportunities
- 3.7. To achieve these outcomes the Plan outlines six strategic objectives. The objectives are six changes which are required at a systems level, which, if achieved, are likely to lead to agencies working more efficiently and effectively together with resulting positive impacts across all of the outcomes. The strategic objectives are:
- Protect the most vulnerable
 - Close the gap for the most vulnerable

- Promote resilience and positive choices
- Achieve better from the use of collective resources
- Maximise the use of community assets
- Develop the system's workforce and culture

- 3.8. The Plan is a high level document and as such does not include full detail on how it is anticipated these objectives will be implemented, it does however outline some examples of the ways in which agencies will work together to bring about desired changes and some examples of the ways in which the achievement of the objectives will be measured. This is summarised in a one page 'Plan on a Page'.
- 3.9. Following agreement of the Plan the Partnership will agree a full delivery plan for implementing priority elements. It is intended that this delivery plan will be focused on a limited number of actions but that it will be regularly updated so that the entirety of the Plan will be addressed over its course. Similar activity will also be undertaken by the four Locality Children's Partnership Boards. While using the Plan as their strategic framework, the specific actions selected by Locality Boards will reflect their understanding of local need and priority and of the effectiveness of existing partnership activity in each area.
- 3.10. A full performance management framework will be used to monitor progress against the Plan at County level incorporating a range of data including statistical and user voice.
- 3.11. Across all of its objectives the Plan recognises that there are certain groups of children in Essex who are vulnerable and that for these groups it may be harder for them to do as well as others without additional support from agencies and their communities. The Plan has a clear focus on these groups of children and young people with the intention of, over time, closing the gap in outcomes between these groups and others. The Plan strongly promotes the early provision of help and the development of greater resilience amongst these groups to lessen future demand on public services and to secure more positive futures for these families.
- 3.12. The public consultation on the Plan ran for six weeks to 1 April 2016. This had 234 respondents, mainly professionals. Between 86%-100% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the priorities, outcomes and objectives outlined in the Plan. The majority of respondents commented positively about the role of the Plan in underlining the importance of agencies working together and said they felt that it would provide a driver within their agencies for doing this more effectively.
- 3.13. The main comments made received in the consultation feedback requested further clarification in respect of the meaning and intention of the priority originally named in the consultation document 'socially connected' and the objective originally termed 'behaviour change for resilience and positive choices'. Other respondents asked for further detail on how the Plan would be implemented and how this would be managed in the context of reducing financial resources.

- 3.14. Changes have been made to the final Plan to respond to these areas of concern. This has included renaming socially connected to better articulate its meaning (now called 'involved and connected') and changing 'behaviour change' to 'promote resilience and positive choices'; this is intended to highlight the importance of enabling individuals to make their own choices to change their behaviour rather than behaviour change being enforced upon them. Section 8 of the Plan regarding implementation has also been amended to include additional explanation of the process for developing and implementing delivery plans at both County and locality level. In relation to concerns about the financial context, although the original document did articulate that this was a challenge the foreword of the document has been updated to underline that this is recognised by the Partnership and that the key focus must be on identifying what greater value can be achieved from within existing resources. This issue is further expanded on by the objective about making efficient use of collective resources.
- 3.15. The Plan will be considered by the Partnership on 12 May 2016. It has also already received endorsement from other partnership bodies including the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Essex Partnership Board.
- 3.16. The Plan has also been approved or is in the process of being approved through the governance routes of the Clinical Commissioning Groups, Essex Police and the Schools Forum. Representatives of all these organisations have been fully involved with the development of the Plan to date and regular progress reports have been provided. Agreeing the Plan through multiple agency governance processes is a new arrangement for this iteration. This is intended to symbolise full multi-agency commitment to the Plan and to provide a more robust basis for holding agencies to account for its implementation and for working in accordance with its principles.
- 3.17. On completion a communications plan will be implemented to ensure maximum reach of the Plan to the children's workforce. The Plan is a short document and is summarised into a one page 'Plan on a Page'; it is intended that this will assist with the development of widespread familiarisation. A short animated film is also being developed to share key messages with the public.
- 3.18. The Partnership will undertake a 'health check' activity during June 2016 to ensure it is fit for purpose to support the implementation of the new Plan. The Plan establishes the intention that the Partnership should be recognised and act as a systems leadership body for the children and families' agenda; this activity will allow the leaders represented on this body to establish their commitment to this and consider how this intention can best be achieved.
- 3.19. The terms of reference for the Partnership are also being reviewed to ensure an appropriate governance framework is in place through which member agencies can be held to account for the implementation of the Plan. A similar activity will also be conducted by the Locality Boards, all of which have also undertaken and responded to a local 'health check'.

4. Policy context and Outcomes Framework

- 4.1. The Plan is fully aligned to the principles of the Essex Vision 2013-17 and contributes in particular to addressing the challenges outlined in that document of: increasing educational achievement and enhancing skills, improving public health and wellbeing, safeguarding vulnerable people and keeping communities safe and building community resilience.
- 4.2. The Children and Young People's Plan is a key enabler of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2018 and has particular relevance to the achievement of the priorities under 'Starting and developing well' and 'Living and working well'.
- 4.3. The Plan relates to the Council's Corporate Outcomes Framework 2014-2018 and all 7 of the corporate outcomes and associated commissioning strategies. Particular attention has been given in the development of the Plan to the engagement of commissioners and operational services across both People and Place and it is intended that the Plan should provide a strong bridge for encouraging closer working between the two.
- 4.4. The development of the Plan has included a review the existing suite of multi and single agency plans and strategies which are relevant to this area of activity. The objectives and actions from within these documents have been mapped to ensure an appropriate read across and to avoid duplication.
- 4.5. The Plan gives consideration to all relevant aspects of national legislation, policy and guidance.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. Activity to develop a resource envelope to support the implementation of the Children and Young People's Plan will be taken forward during the financial year 2016/17.
- 5.2. The Plan will be realistic in terms of what it will ask agencies to do and will focus on a small number of activities which will be achievable by agencies working better together within existing resources.
- 5.3. The development of the Plan has included the formation of a multi-agency working group which has considered the implications of increasing political, legislative and other demands and reducing financial resources across the system. Learning from the group has informed the development of the Plan.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. The Council was formerly required to approve a Children and Young Person's Plan by section 17 of the Children Act 2004. However, in 2010 that section was replaced by a new version of section 17. Under the new section 17 the local authority ceases to have the duty or power to produce a plan. Instead, the new section 17 empowered the Secretary of State to make regulations to require Children's Trust Boards to produce a Children and Young Person's Plan.
- 6.2. Transitional regulations kept the existing local authority plan in force until the new plan was produced by the Children's Trust Board in accordance with regulations.
- 6.3. Unfortunately the regulations which required the Children's Trust Boards to produce plans were repealed in 2010. This means that the Board has no authority to make plans and the Council cannot change its statutory plan – because that legislation was repealed.
- 6.4. The Plan is not therefore the statutory children and young persons' plan but should be seen as a helpful, non-statutory, document which explains how the Council seeks to work together in co-operation with partners.

7. Staffing and other resource implications

- 7.1. There are no staffing or other resource implications at the current time.

8. Equality and Diversity implications

- 8.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 8.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

- 8.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. The Plan is a high level strategic document which has at its heart the promotion of equality, the promotion of community cohesion and the closure of gaps in outcomes for different groups. A full delivery plan will be developed following the agreement of the Plan, this will contain more detailed proposals for implementing particular aspects of the Plan and further assessments of equality and diversity implications will be completed at this time.

9. List of Appendices

(available at www.essex.gov.uk if not circulated with this report)

- 9.1. Children and Young People's Strategic Plan 2016
- 9.2. Summary of consultation responses
- 9.3. Equality Impact Assessment

10. List of Background Papers

- 10.1. Consultation document and responses.

.