

**TO: THE EXECUTIVE
29 MARCH 2011**

**CREATING OPPORTUNITIES - A JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE IN BRACKNELL FOREST 2011 – 2014
Director of Children, Young People and Learning**

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Executive Creating Opportunities- A Joint Strategic Plan for Children and Young People in Bracknell Forest.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 That the Executive commends the plan to the Children and Young People's Trust.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Children and Young People's Strategic Plan [CYPP] is an important element of the reforms underpinned by the Children Act 2004. The first CYPP was published in Bracknell Forest in 2006 and was developed as a result of extensive engagement and consultation with statutory partners and stakeholders including children, young people and their families.
- 3.2 In subsequent years the CYPP has been systematically reviewed to ensure it remained current and relevant to the needs of children, young people and families. This plan will be reviewed annually in the same way to ensure the priorities reflect the needs of children, young people and families, and the resources kept under consideration in light of the current and ongoing reductions in resources.
- 3.3 The original plan was due to end in April, 2009, however the Government indicated that there would be changes to the legislation and guidance supporting the work of the Children and Young People's Trust, in effect strengthening the structure, placing the Children and Young People's Trust on a statutory footing, and placing a requirement on the Trust to produce a Children and Young People's Plan. The existing plan was therefore reviewed and rolled over while new guidance was developed.
- 3.4 The legislative changes were made late in 2009, however the new Coalition Government in 2010, revoked the legislation which had placed the Children and Young People's Trust on a statutory footing and removed the requirement to produce a CYPP.
- 3.5 Whilst the legislation removed the requirement to develop a CYPP, the emphasis on partnership working remained strong, and the Duty to Cooperate under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 remained intact.
- 3.6 The Children and Young People's Trust considered the options in relation to developing a plan, and concluded that it had proven to be a strong and effective tool to support partnership working and has a greater impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people. The decision was made therefore to develop a new

plan and to continue to do this under the framework of the Children and Young People's Trust, linked to the Bracknell Forest Partnership.

- 3.7 The CYPP is a single, strategic, overarching plan for all services which effect children and young people in the area, provided by the local authority and all relevant partners. Delivery of the priorities is through a range of plans and strategies that underpin the CYPP, and these include Creating Opportunities – Securing Success, The Secondary Education Strategy, and Creating Opportunities – Breaking the Cycle, The Child Poverty strategy, both currently before the Executive for approval.
- 3.8 The public sector equality duty provisions will come into force in April 2011. The Council will have a general duty to pay due regard to:
- Advance equality of opportunity
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and
 - Foster good relations.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Plan will be one of a range of plans and strategies that will demonstrate the way in which the Council and its partners are achieving this duty.

- 3.9 Following publication of the full plan which will be available on the Council website, we will develop a summary version of the plan for distribution. We will also work in partnership with the Youth Parliament to produce a version of the plan for children, young people and families, which will highlight the key information in the plan and identify what they might contribute to support the delivery of the plan.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The alternative option not to produce a plan was considered and dismissed, as set out in 3.6 above.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 The main aim of the plan is to work with partners to identify and agree joint priorities for improving life chances and outcomes for children, young people and their families, and to identify how work will progress to address the priorities.
- 5.2 The legislative basis for the plan is Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, which places a duty to cooperate between the local authority and its relevant partners with a view to improving the well-being of children and young people in the Borough.
- 5.3 The plan has been developed following a very thorough process which has included:
- Reviewing performance and inspection findings, identifying key strengths and areas for development.
 - Revising and updating the Children and Young People's Needs Analysis, and using relevant information from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to identify specific factors which may have an impact on life chances, for example health issues, those from vulnerable groups who may not be achieving to their full potential, children in low income families.

- Undertaking a range of consultation which includes a Visioning event for partners and stakeholders, which attracted over 70 participants, giving presentations and workshops at various groups and partnerships which for example includes the Bracknell Forest Partnership, and the Cultural Partnership, and the Children and Young People's Trust.
- Other consultation includes the Youth Council developing and undertaking a Community Survey, where they developed a questionnaire to carry out with their peers [with over 230 responses]. This was followed up by an event for sixty young people aged 10 to 16, facilitated by the Youth Council, where they considered a range of questions and possible solutions.
- A targeted questionnaire aimed at parent / carers of children from a number of backgrounds was also carried out, including those with learning difficulties / disabilities, those accessing the Youth Offending Service, the Open Learning Centre, Children's Centres and the Family Adolescent Support Team.
- Local research was carried out which focused on gaining greater insight into the support some of our more vulnerable young people had received, and what had been useful and effective for them.
- The work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board [LSCB] has a significant overlap with the work of the Children and Young People's Trust and the LSCB Annual report has made a number of recommendations which are considered within the new CYPP.

5.4 It has been agreed that there will be four outcome priorities, and six underpinning priorities which will form the core of the new plan. All of these priorities will require partners to work collaboratively in order to ensure we are able to continue to support our children and young people in the most effective and efficient way.

Outcome Priorities

- Raise levels of attainment and pupil progress across all phases of learning for all pupils.
- Improve physical and emotional health and wellbeing from conception to birth and throughout life
- Safeguard and protect children and young people
- Increase opportunities for all children and young people, especially the more vulnerable [e.g. minority ethnic groups, vulnerable learners, children looked after, children with learning difficulties / disabilities, young people post 16, those not in employment, education or training, young carers, children living in poverty, young offenders, and those at risk of offending]

Underpinning Priorities

- Support children and young people through key transitions in their lives
- Embed prevention and early intervention into the routine delivery of all services to children and young people, and their families.
- Close the gap between children from low income backgrounds and their peers

- Strengthen parents and families through effective family support and engagement
- Support children and young people to become active citizens within their community
Ensure good quality service provision through effective commissioning

5.5 Delivery of the plan will be through a broad range of local authority and partner activity, and supported by a wide range of plans and strategies, which are listed in the attached document.

5.6 The plan has been developed during a period where there have been significant reductions in budget allocations within the Council and with partner agencies with the prospect that this is likely to continue during the remainder of the current spending review. The plan does not identify the use of additional resources to deliver the priorities, it is intended that these are achieved within the resources available, and with a clear focus on more effective commissioning and joint commissioning to achieve the necessary economies, and to promote partnership working. The removal of 'ring fences' on grants with the creation of an Early Intervention Grant also presents the opportunity to be more flexible with how resources need to be spent.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report. As stated in the report although there is no longer a statutory requirement to produce a plan it is permissible to continue the practice particularly where partners have found it a useful focus.

Borough Treasurer

6.2 The Council allocates its financial resources through the budget process in the context of its medium term financial plan. Currently the medium term financial plan forecasts that the Council will need to make significant budget reductions over the next few years. That said over the same period the Council will have to develop increased efficiency in service delivery while responding to demographic changes, new legislation and the need to modernise services. This will require the reallocation of the Council's limited resources.

6.3 In order to deliver these service changes the Council publishes a range of strategies and policies to help it allocate these limited resources to the optimum effect. A strategy or policy does not represent a financial commitment. These strategies also form the basis of the annual service plan which ensures that the development of the Council's services is consistent with its medium term objectives.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4 The Children and Young People's Strategic Plan has been developed to ensure it has a focus on **all** children and young people, it recognises that some children and young people may have additional needs which arise as a result of disadvantage, the Plan has identified these disadvantages and considers how services can support these effectively.

- 6.5. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.6 The plan is designed to be delivered through the organisations that sit on the Children and Young People's Partnership, and is reliant on partners working together to consider pooled, aligned budgets, or joint commissioning. There is a risk that partners will not work together, however this has been addressed by ensuring the process of developing the plan has fully engaged with partners, and they are signed up to the priorities. Progress will be closely monitored through the bi-monthly Children and Young People's Partnership Board (formerly the Children and Young People's Trust) meetings.
- 6.7 There is a risk of further reductions in budgets which could have an impact on the capacity to deliver the priorities in the plan. This will be closely monitored by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board through the bi-monthly meetings.

Other Officers

- 6.8 N/A

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 The list of people consulted during the completion of the plan is extensive and details are contained within the plan.

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Various methods of consultation used, including presentations, workshops, events and questionnaires.

Representations Received

- 7.3 The outcome of the consultation is included within the plan and has contributed significantly to the priorities.

Contact for further information

Janette Karklins, Social Care and Learning – 01344 354182

Email: janette.karklins@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Sandra Davies, Social Care and Learning – 01344 354017

Email: sandra.davies@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

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