

People Scrutiny Committee

20 July 2020

Children and Young People and Families' Plan 2020-2023

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr A Parry, Children, Education and Early Help

Local Councillor(s):

Executive Director: Theresa Leavy, Interim Lead for Children's Services

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation: The overview and scrutiny committee are asked:

1. To consider the proposals for the development of the Children and Young People and Families' Plan.
2. To provide feedback on the proposed priorities to enable the development of the final plan by the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People before it is recommended by Cabinet for endorsement and adoption by the Full Council.
3. To note and endorse the shared commitment of the partnership as set out in the Governance and Terms of Reference of the Dorset Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People.

Reason for Recommendation: The Full Council is required to adopt a Children and Young People's Plan as part of the Council's policy framework by 31 March 2021. The recommendation will enable a plan to be developed jointly with our partners before final adoption by the Council.

1. Executive Summary

Dorset Council, working with its partners - the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, is developing a new 3-year strategic plan to improve long term outcomes for children and young people.

The Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People is a multi-agency partnership which includes partners from police, health, schools and early years settings, voluntary and community sector.

In 2019 the Strategic Alliance reaffirmed their shared commitment to working together for children and young people in Dorset and refreshed their Governance and Terms of Reference document setting out the role and aims of the partnership. This is provided in Appendix 1.

The vision for the partnership is:

“Our vision is for Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive and families are supported to be the best they can be.”

To deliver this vision a set of emerging priorities have been identified and classified into six themes:

- **Best start in life:** focused on re-imagining how services are delivered to families who are expecting and have pre-school children, ensuring the best possible start in life and improving school readiness.
- **Delivering locally:** focused on joining up services in Dorset to become a whole system that strengthens the ability of families to care and sustain their children through embedding the new model of children’s services, identifying opportunities for service integration and building on community assets.
- **Young and thriving:** focused on setting up our young people for success in adulthood; ensuring young people have a strong voice; contextual safeguarding and good emotional wellbeing and mental health, preparation for adulthood, and preventing family breakdown.
- **Good care provision:** focused on keeping our children close to home and ensuring partners are the best corporate parents by ensuring there is sufficient care provision locally (foster care, residential and short breaks), supporting young people at risk of homelessness and suitable and safe housing for care leavers
- **Good education for all:** focused on supporting schools and educational settings to deliver the best education possible and ensuring all children and young people can achieve their full potential, meeting the needs of children with SEND and building inclusive school cultures
- **Shared culture and approach:** focused on agreeing the partnership principles of how we work together, putting families at the heart of decision making and the development of a joint commissioning strategy and a joint workforce development strategy.

The emerging priorities in the plan have been identified through needs analysis, an initial workshop with members of the Strategic Alliance and a series of think tanks (attended by over 100 professionals from the partnership).

Engagement with children and young people and parents and carers is underway and will be completed by the end of August. The Strategic Alliance will finalise and agree the plan by September before it is recommended to Cabinet for endorsement and adoption by Full Council.

2. Financial Implications

None identified at this stage.

3. Climate implications

None identified at this stage.

4. Other Implications

This plan will seek to ensure the involvement of voluntary and community organisations in the delivery of a plan to support the wellbeing of children and young people, including meeting our responsibilities as corporate parents.

5. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

An equalities impact assessment will be completed as part of the development of the full plan. Officers are currently involved in engagement activity and data analysis that will inform the development of the plan.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Governance and Terms of Reference June 2020

Appendix 2: Children and Young People's Engagement campaign

8. Background Papers

9. Introduction & Background

- 9.1 Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the requirement for the local authority to promote that partners co-operate to improve wellbeing of children and young people. Best practice is for Local Authorities and their partners to produce and deliver a Children and Young People's Plan bringing together in one strategic overarching plan the partnership's shared commitment to work together to improve outcomes for children and young people.
- 9.2 In Dorset the Council has maintained its commitment to improve outcomes for children and young people in producing and publishing a Children and Young People's Plan as part of its constitution and formal Policy Framework.
- 9.3 The current partnership Strategy for Children and Young People in Dorset comes to an end in 2020. During 2019 Dorset Council with partners of the multi-agency Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People agreed to undertake the work to develop a new 3-year Children, Young People and Families Plan.
- 9.4 This work commenced in March 2020, following an analysis of data and a partnership workshop, a set of initial priorities were identified. These priorities were then further developed through a series of 'think tanks' attended by over 100 professionals from across the partnership, parents/carers and children and young people. Employee engagement with children's services has also been undertaken through June and early July.
- 9.5 Engagement with children and young people is underway, through a creative challenge to support the development of the plan. This campaign (Appendix 2) has been shared through social media channels and through schools and colleges. Further engagement is planned with parents and carers through the summer.
- 9.6 The Strategic Alliance will finalise and agree the plan by September 2020 before it is recommended to Cabinet for endorsement and adoption by Full Council.

10. Development of the plan

- 10.1 The vision for Dorset Children and Young People agreed by the partnership is:

“Our vision is for Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best that they can be”

- 10.2 A set of principles to guide the development of the plan have been agreed by the partnership which include: optimise the partnership dividend by focusing on the things we can make a real difference to by working together; work on the longer term vision, focusing on the big picture; think the unthinkable; innovate and try new things; be brave; be one system that works to achieve the very best outcomes possible for children; deliver value for money; and wherever possible spend the Dorset pound in Dorset.
- 10.3 Using analysis of data and information already known to the partnership about outcomes and performance gaps a set of priority areas for development emerged:
- (a) **Best Start in Life:** aims to reimagine how services are delivered to families who are expecting and have pre-school children. This seeks to address low social mobility and improve school readiness; improve outcomes for our youngest children and address the issue of increased numbers of young children in child protection cases or coming into care. Priorities in this theme will include improving sharing of information and data, better identification of those that might need help early, improved pathways between maternity, health visiting and local authority services and the development of intergenerational Family Hubs.
 - (b) **Delivering locally:** aims to create a whole system that strengthens families’ ability to care and sustain. This seeks to address the high proportion of children in care in Dorset, improve the range of early help on offer and address parental issues such as domestic abuse, mental ill health and substance misuse. Priorities in this theme will include embedding the new model for children’s services; community engagement and asset building; and opportunities for partnership service integration.
 - (c) **Young and thriving:** aims to set up our young people for success in adulthood. This seeks to address the issue of poorer outcomes for children who enter care later in their childhood; embed work on improving our approach to child exploitation and county lines; ensure all young people are prepared for adulthood. Priorities in this theme will include ensuring young people have a strong voice; developing our approach to contextual safeguarding; good emotional wellbeing and mental health; preparation for adulthood; and preventing family breakdown through edge of care services and support.

(d) **Good care provision:** aims to keep our children close to home and to ensure that partners are the best corporate parents. This seeks to increase the number of children in family based care that are able to be cared for in Dorset and closer to their friends, family and schools; improve the educational and housing outcomes for our children in care and care leavers and improve their health and wellbeing. Priorities in this theme will focus on improving the availability of short breaks; increasing and improving support and accommodation for vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness and care leavers; increase the availability of local residential provision; increase the number of foster carers and work in partnership to improve our offer children in care and care leavers, including health and wellbeing and education and employment opportunities.

(e) **Good Education for all:** aims to ensure that our schools and educational settings are supported to deliver the best education possible and that our children achieve their full potential. This seeks to improve the proportion of schools that are good or outstanding across the county; improve educational progress of children; reduce the number of exclusions from school, improve school attendance and support children that are educated at home. Priorities in this theme will include building the partnership with schools and academies to develop and implement an Education and Inclusion Strategy; improve educational outcomes for more vulnerable children; and further improve our offer to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

(f) **Shared culture and approach:** aims to put families at the heart of decision making and provide the tools for the partnership to make a difference. There is strong partnership commitment to working together to make the best use of our collective resources in times of increased demand and a challenging financial situation for all partners. Priorities in this theme will include the development of a Joint Commissioning Strategy and a Joint Workforce Development Plan.

11. Recommendation

11.1 Members of the overview and scrutiny committee are asked:

1. To consider the proposals for the development of the Children and Young People and Families' Plan.
2. To provide feedback on the proposed priorities to enable the development of the final plan by the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People before it is recommended by Cabinet for adoption by the Full Council.

3. To note and endorse the shared commitment of the partnership as set out in the Governance and Terms of Reference of the Dorset Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.