

The Cabinet – 15 March 2006

Report of the Director of Children's Services

The Children and Young People's Plan

Purpose

1. The purpose of the Report is to seek the Cabinet's comments on the attached draft Children and Young People's Plan which is presently being consulted upon.

Background

2. Under the Children Act 2004 the Council is required to work with its partners to prepare and publish the Children and Young People's Plan ('the Plan') which sets out the strategic intentions of the Council and its statutory partners with respect to children and young people. The Plan must be published for 1 April 2006. The draft Plan has been published on the Council's web site.
3. Over a period of months, partners have been engaged in developing the draft Plan through a series of meetings and conferences. Consultation work has been undertaken with children and young people over the last two years to ensure that their voices have been heard within the priorities contained in the Plan.
4. The consultation timetable for this first draft Plan has been constrained by the lateness of the statutory guidance and the complexity of securing agreement among all partners. However, it is intended that future draft Plans will be published by the end of the calendar year.
5. Children and young people have been engaged in the detailed development of the draft Plan through workshops and the development of graphics for the final publication. Students at Castle High School are currently developing two executive summaries for the Plan; one aimed at children under 11 and one aimed at young people over 11, which will

also be used as the overall executive summary for the Plan to be shared with parents/carers and all partners.

6. The draft Plan reflects the priorities of the Community Strategy, the Black Country Study, all of the agencies within the Children and the Young People's Partnership and relates to the themed priorities of both the Community Strategy and the Council Plan.
7. The Plan will be the first full multi-agency document for the Children and Young People's Partnership and the Directorate of Children's Services; it will replace the requirements to publish a variety of statutory and non-statutory plans within the Council.

Finance

8. The Plan will be delivered from within existing resources; some located within the Directorate of Children's Services and elsewhere within approved Council budgets, and some from the statutory partners within the Children and Young People's Partnership.

Law

9. The Children Act 2004 and subsequent statutory guidance sets out a requirement for Councils to develop, with their partners, a single plan which describes the strategic priorities and intentions for the Council and its partners in improving the outcomes and well-being of all children and young people in the Borough.

Equality Impact

10. The draft Plan is in accord with the Council's equality policies.

Children and Young People

11. The draft Plan reflects the identified needs and priorities for all children and young people in the borough. The Plan prioritises the need to narrow the gap for those who are more vulnerable or disadvantaged, and, as such, reflects the Council's and Directorate's Equality and Diversity Policy.
12. Children and young people have been actively engaged in drafting the Plan.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
- consider the draft Plan;
 - note that the final Plan will be agreed by a joint Decision Sheet of the Cabinet Members for Education and Lifelong Learning and for Social Services for publication from 1 April 2006.



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Background documents

Every Child Matters, DfES 2003, and subsequent publications
The Children Act 2004
Statutory Guidance on the Children and Young People's Plan, DfES 2005
The National Service Framework for Children and Maternity Services,
Department of Health, 2004