

CABINET

7 MARCH 2023

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mrs Josie Iles, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (Lead Member)

Report from: Dr. Lee-Anne Farach, Director of People

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Summary

The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) sets out our partnership vision and priorities to support and help young people in Medway over the next 3 years. The plan has been based on consultation with children, young people, carried out through the Child Friendly Medway initiative. This plan applies to a wide range of organisations that are committed to making children's lives better, including Children's Services, Health, Police, Schools, and voluntary and community organisations. It is important that these organisations work together to better meet the challenges and utilise resources in an efficient and cost-effective way.

The Children and Young People's Plan sets out the overarching direction we need to take in partnership to enable children and young people in Medway, to reach their full potential.

This report was considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 17 November 2022 and the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 November 2022, their comments are set out in section 5 and 6 of the report.

1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1. There is no longer a statutory requirement for local authorities to have a published Children and Young People's plan, but it is a document which supports collaborative partnership working and is a way of demonstrating engagement and commitment to a set of shared priorities across the partnership.
- 1.2. The Plan is aligned with the Council Strategy priority "Supporting Medway's people to realise their potential".

- 1.3. It is consistent with the Medway's People's Strategy and provides a golden thread of shared priorities for all people in Medway.

2. Background

- 2.1. Since the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services carried out by Ofsted in 2019 found services in Medway to be 'Inadequate', partners have worked together through the Children's Improvement Board to support the implementation of shared priorities as set out in Medway's Improvement Plan.
- 2.2. The council continues to work to a Statutory Direction issued by the DFE in January 2021, which requires regular reports on a quarterly basis to the Secretary of State from the DFE appointed adviser and the Chair of the Improvement Board on progress in delivering the Council's improvement plan.
- 2.3. Medway has now had five Monitoring Visits carried out by Ofsted inspectors between August 2020 and September 2022. One further visit is anticipated in early 2023 prior to a full re-inspection under the ILACS framework in spring/summer 2023. Depending on the outcome of the ILACS inspection, it is likely that the Statutory Direction will be either varied or rescinded, and partners will be expected to then work together to a shared set of priorities and agreed actions, to build on and expand the work which has been undertaken through the Improvement Plan. The Children and Young People's Plan will be the vehicle which will support that.

3. Vision and Strategic Outcomes

- 3.1. The Children and Young People's Plan is consistent with the People's Strategy which is underpinned by a strengths-based approach, which champions resilience and independence; focus on strengths within individuals, families, and wider community;
- 3.2. The vision statement within the plan is:

Working together, keeping children and families at the heart of what we do.

- *We will work together with children, young people and families to help them feel safe, secure, valued and supported.*
- *We will work with children and families, to live in stable supportive homes building caring and consistent relationships that help them to develop into independent adults.*
- *We will value strengths, celebrate differences and listen to children to keep them at the heart of what we do.*

- 3.3. The Plan sets out the following strategic outcomes:

- Children and young people will be safe
- Children in Medway will have the best start in life
- Children and young people in Medway will develop well

- Children and young people in Medway will aspire to become independent and fulfilled adults
- Children and young people in Medway will participate in and contribute to their community and have a meaningful say in decisions and services that shape their lives

4. Governance

- 4.1. An Outcomes Framework has been developed to help us to measure progress against the difference we are making to improve children's lives (**see Appendix A in the plan**), and as a way of holding each other to account. It is proposed that the progress in delivering the Children and Young People's Plan will be monitored by the Health and Wellbeing Board and it is noted that the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee have also expressed their intention to scrutinise progress of the plan (see section 6).
- 4.2. Key elements will also be monitored on a quarterly basis through the Council Plan to demonstrate progress in achieving actions and targets.
- 4.3. These key performance measures will be finalised with partners to be consistent with the People's Strategy and linked through to the Council Plan monitoring.

5. Health and Wellbeing Board

- 5.1. The Health and Wellbeing Board considered the report at its meeting on 17 November 2022 and its comments are set out as follows:
- 5.2. The Director of People, Children and Adult's services introduced the Plan, which has been based on previous consultation with young people and partners and sets out the vision and priorities of the partnership.
- 5.3. The Board was informed that whilst there was no statutory requirement for a Plan, it was decided that it was necessary given the improvement and transformation journey that was being undertaken in the service.
- 5.4. Members made the following comments:
 - The decision to develop a Plan despite not being statutorily required was commended
 - Asked how to ensure that the voices of all children in Medway were consulted on as part of the plan and the role services had in this, the Director of People said that the Child Friendly Medway initiative played a major role in capturing the voice of children and young people. Schools also played an instrumental part in capturing the diverse views of children
 - Asked what assurance could be given to families in Medway given the recent tragic news of the death of a child in Rochdale of respiratory problems as a result of prolonged exposure to household mould. The Head of Strategic Housing said that lessons could be learnt from the

recent events. There were 15000 rented homes in the private sector across Medway and the department did not have access to all of them. It was vital that the team continued to try to access homes where issues with damp had been identified in order to provide education on ventilation as well hold landlords to account or deal with issues in public sector housing stock. The challenge was in raising awareness in the community of the support available and accessibility. The Director of People added that there was strong interaction across Medway services and children's social care would continue to pass on any information received to housing as well as public health services.

5.5. The Health and Wellbeing Board noted the report.

6. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6.1. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 29 November 2022 and its comments are set out as follows:

6.2. The Head of Improvement introduced the report which provided the draft Children and Young People's Plan, which set out the partnership vision and priorities to support and help young people in Medway over the next three years.

6.3. Members then raised a number of comments and questions which included:

- **Measuring progress** – the view was expressed that Health and Wellbeing Board should not be the only body to monitor progress in delivering the plan, given its children and young people focus and that progress should also be scrutinised by this committee. Officers were supportive of the Committee wanting to monitor progress of the Plan but explained that the Health and Wellbeing Board was also appropriate because of the partnership role in delivering the plan. It was also explained that the Improvement Board was also multi-agency, but at a time when the Improvement Board is no longer needed, it was suggested that Medway may want to set up a Children and Young People Partnership Board to support cross partnership working.
- **Children's voice** – in response to a question about how officers would ensure that the voice of young people would be heard, officers confirmed it was an area of focus. Child Friendly events have been successful in bringing together groups of young people and their families, in seeking their views and it was important to continue and expand on those opportunities.
- **The voice of SEND children** – concern was raised about how effectively the voice of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) would be heard and disappointment was raised in the Medway

Parent and Carer Forum not being consulted on the CYPP. Officers confirmed that consultation had been undertaken through partners via the Improvement board and through the Child Friendly Medway work which had captured the views of a broad range of Medway's children and young people, which they were confident had included children with SEND. Officers confirmed they would welcome the opportunity to look at anything that may have been missed and undertook to liaise with the MPCF to ensure their views were reflected in the plan.

- **Wider partner detail** – suggestion was made that the plan should include an explanation of school governors and it was also raised that dentistry and the difficulty for some young people in gaining appointments should be covered. Officers explained that the CYPP was an overarching high level plan for more focussed partner plans to sit underneath and therefore such detail might be better picked up within service plans which would feed through.
- **Partnership working** – Reference was made to the risk identified in the report regarding the failure to align priorities with partners. In response to a question about ensuring the plan was robust enough to work through transitional arrangements and also the highlighted financial risk, officers explained that a partnership forum was important and confirmed that finance was a risk for all. The strategic objectives were kept at a high level so partners could sign up to them, while recognising that resources may be limited and therefore partnership working that was developing would provide synergy and support the focus on bringing together resources etc to maximise delivery.
- **Disadvantaged young people** – concern was expressed about the levels of young people who were disadvantaged and whether a lack of early identification of need was a factor and with that in mind, felt the section of the plan relating to the best start in life, was not aspirational enough. Officers explained that it had been important to know the base line in order to evaluate progress and added that the strategic objectives enabled partners to be aspirational in their own delivery and how they contribute to the plan's objectives. Officers also confirmed that the policies and plans that sit underneath the CYPP went much further in setting out how the Council, and its partners, work to support different groups of young people, including those with SEND.

6.4. The Committee noted the report and agreed that in addition to the HWB having a role in monitoring progress of the CYPP at a partnership level, the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee also scrutinise the Plan's progress.

7. Director's comments

- 7.1. The Director of People has noted the comments set out in section 5.4 and 6.3 of this report.
- 7.2. Consultation with the Medway Parent and Carer Forum has now taken place and an amendment made to the Plan to reflect their views about ensuring parents and carers have a voice in service planning and delivery. They recognise that detail of delivery will be picked up in individual service plans.
- 7.3. Other comments above have been noted and will be addressed in the launch of the Plan with partners.
- 7.4. Oversight by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as well as the Health and Wellbeing Board is welcomed.

8. Risk management

- 8.1. The risks associated with the Children and Young People's Plan are outlined in the table below:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Children and Young People's Plan not aligned with partner priorities	Plan is not aligned which results in opportunities lost to sustain joined-up, efficient and effective services in collaboration with all our partners.	Consultation with all key stakeholders including partners.	C2

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very high	1 Catastrophic (Showstopper)
B High	2 Critical
C Significant	3 Marginal
D Low	4 Negligible
E Very low	
F Almost impossible	

9. Consultation

- 9.1. There is no requirement for a formal consultation as part of the process for this Plan

10. Climate change implications

- 10.1. There are no implications as a direct result of the recommendations of this report.

11. Financial implications

11.1 There are no implications as a direct result of the recommendations of this report.

12. Legal implications

12.1. There are no implications as a direct result of the recommendations of this report.

13. Recommendations

13.1. The Cabinet is asked to note the comments made by the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting and the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out at sections 5 and 6 of the report.

13.2 The Cabinet is asked to approve the Children and Young People Plan, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

14. Suggested reasons for decision

14.1. The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) sets out our partnership vision and priorities to support and help young people in Medway over the next three years. Approval of the Plan will support partner organisations to work together to better meet the challenges and utilise resources in an efficient and cost-effective way.

Lead officer contact

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Children and Young People's Plan 2023-25

Appendix 2 – Diversity Impact Assessment

Background papers

None