
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2014-2017

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Cyndi Hughes,
Children and Young People Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Murray Rose, Director of People

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. This report asks Council to approve the draft Children and Young People's Plan 2014-2017 (**Appendix A**), as recommended by Cabinet on July 1st 2014. Although no longer a statutory requirement, a strategic plan for assessing the performance of services for children and young people and for setting priorities for the medium term is best practice.

Summary

2. The Council and partner organisations have recently agreed the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Darlington and the Children and Young People's Plan identifies what key actions will be taken to deliver the agreed SCS priority of *the best start in life for every child*, in particular, and to make contributions to other priorities set out in the SCS.
3. The Children and Young People's Plan forms a part of the Council's Policy Framework and must be approved by Council.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that the draft Children and Young People's Plan (Appendix A) be approved by Council.

Reasons

5. To comply with the Council's Policy Framework.

**Murray Rose
Director of People**

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Murray Rose : Extension 2099
PB

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report will support measures to reduce crime and disorder amongst young people.
Health and Well Being	This report supports the strategy to improve the health and well being of children and young people.
Carbon Impact	There are no implications arising from this report.
Diversity	There are no implications arising from this report.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	Children and Young People
Budget and Policy Framework	There are no implications for the Budget or Policy Framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report contributes to the priorities agreed by the sustainable community strategy and its recent refresh
Efficiency	This report supports the efficient use of partner resources through shared priorities

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. The Children Act (2004) introduced powers for the Secretary of State to require local authorities to produce plans to show how partner agencies with a duty to co-operate under the Act were discharging their duties with respect to children's services. The Darlington plan, known as the Children and Young People's Plan, included previous performance, strategic assessments of need, agreed areas for joint working and resources available to deliver the agreed priorities. In addition, each plan was expected to have been developed in conjunction with young people themselves.
7. Although there is no longer a requirement to produce a Children and Young People's Plan, it is considered good practice to still produce a strategic document across partners (there is still a statutory duty on partner agencies to co-operate to support and safeguard children). Regulatory bodies, such as Ofsted, routinely comment on the existence or otherwise of a strategic plan. Holding organisations to account is much more robust where there is an agreed set of evidence based priorities and measurements of progress against them.

8. Partners in Darlington, led by the Children's Collective chaired by Councillor Cyndi Hughes, reviewed the progress made since the last Children and Young People's Plan was published (2011) and recognised that good progress had been made against targets but that there were still areas where children were not necessarily fulfilling their potential or leading safe and healthy lives. As a result, the Collective agreed to develop a further Children and Young People's Plan and to set within it actions which would contribute to the new SCS, One Darlington: Perfectly Placed.
9. Development of the Plan has taken place alongside the development of the SCS and the Collective has led on the consultation with young people about what should be in the Children and Young People's Plan, and hence the SCS. Furthermore, the development of the Plan included the period of the election of the Youth Member of Parliament (YMP) for Darlington and this gave the opportunity for some thousands of Darlington young people to have their say about what mattered most to them.
10. The Plan has been produced at a time of relative austerity in public finances and so sets realistic actions for the 3 year period of the Plan. In line with the SCS it prioritises work to give children the best start in life, recognising that money spent wisely in early interventions can save larger amounts of money in the longer term.
11. In order to avoid duplication of effort and resources, progress against the Plan will be reported through the Performance Framework agreed previously by Council and also agreed by the Darlington Partnership. The Collective, representing all partner agencies, will monitor progress against the Plan and will take action where necessary to challenge areas of underperformance.

Legal Implications

12. There are no specific HR, Legal or Finance implications from this report. Council services are already funded in the MTFP to prioritise early intervention and preventative services as a result of the Money Talks consultation held in 2013.

Consultation

13. The draft Plan has been extensively consulted on through regular meetings of the Collective, through engagement activity with children and young people and by incorporating the priorities voted on by over 4,000 young people through the YMP election.

Outcome of Consultation

14. Significantly, the priorities identified by young people closely matched those identified through the Community Survey, the Strategic Needs Assessment and through the performance monitoring of a wide range of agencies.