

HAMPSHIRE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN 2009-12: CONSULTATION

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek the endorsement of Cabinet of the reply made by the Chief Executive to the consultation on the Children and Young People Plan for Hampshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The first Children and Young People Plan for Hampshire was produced in 2006 and provided guidance across all agencies in organising their priorities for work with this sector. This was also the case in respect of the local partnerships within individual Districts (a role performed in New Forest by the Community Action Network for Children and Young People). This has established strong ties between national, county and local actions.
- 2.2 Hampshire County Council has, on behalf of the Children and Young People Management Board, produced a refreshed version of the Children and Young People Plan. The Plan is a statutory document and the District Council has a “Duty to co-operate” in the creation and implementation of the Plan. Irrespective of the Legislative “Duty”, the Council has a strong history of partnership working across all agencies in its own right and through the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 2.3 The vision for the Plan is:

“We want to make Hampshire a better place for children and young people, where all of them, including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, have the best possible start in life and are supported by the whole community to reach their potential”.
- 2.4 The new Plan is structured differently to the first version but presents similar issues. The continuity is useful and will similarly carry through locally. It was open for consultation until 5th January, which did not fit reporting cycles. After consultation with the Leader and Lead Portfolio Holder, it was agreed that the Chief Executive would respond before the deadline, for endorsement at the following Cabinet.

3. OVERALL COMMENTS ON THE PLAN

- 3.1 Detailed comments on the Strategy are set out in the attached Appendix, which is the consultation form provided in the document. The paragraphs points that follow are the key matters from that response:

- More obvious recognition of the role played by District Councils; Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and other relevant bodies outside of Children’s Services and Health.
- More recognition of the importance of positive activities and children having enjoyment and fun.
- Practitioners are encouraged to act more often with early intervention, rather than “after the event”. There is some mention of this in the document, though it is not as evident as it might be.
- It is best practice to engage children and young people in delivering services, however there is insufficient reference to this.
- There are no actions identified in respect of transportation issues which is a key factor affecting services for children and young people.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS /CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 These are all integral to the report and referred to where appropriate.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no particular implications in the report itself, although the priorities will guide the use of resources, principally in Children’s Services but also in partner agencies.

6. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

6.1 The Plan concerns a number of Portfolio Holders, however the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Culture and Youth Matters is the lead for children and young people and fully supports the response, particularly its recognition of the need to be pragmatic.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That Cabinet endorse the response of the Chief Executive to the consultation on the Children and Young People Plan for Hampshire attached as Appendix 1.

For Further Information Please Contact:

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Background Papers:

Published reports

Hampshire Children and Young People's Plan 2009-12

Consultation

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If you have any queries about Hampshire's Children and Young People's Plan or the consultation process, please contact Children's Services on:

Telephone: 01962 845304

Email: childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk

Introduction

1. Is the purpose of the Plan clear?

Yes	Yes	No		Not sure		
Comments:						
The plan is welcomed generally and is a good framework document. It could be better if the six priorities were located closer to the action plans. The thread is lost with the intervention of the fourteen "promises" and seven "statements for making a difference".						

2. Is the language accessible and clear to a wide audience?

Yes	Yes	No	No	Not sure	Not sure	
Comments (including any omissions):						
<p>The last Plan also had a short summary document which was worthwhile for those just needing a more superficial insight to the Plan and its themes. The idea could be used again for this version.</p>						

3. Are the right partners identified?

Yes	Yes	No	No	Not sure	Not sure	
Comments:						
<p>There are specific comments below to areas where other unmentioned partners play a considerable role. In addition the statutory and non statutory partnerships in Health and Wellbeing and Crime and Disorder Reduction need including in some of the sections.</p>						

Section 1 - Where we are now

1. Is this section concise and clear in setting out the Hampshire picture?

Yes	Yes	No	No	Not sure	Not sure	
Comments:						
<p>The engagement with Faith Groups/ Communities should be specifically mentioned in the “progress” list.</p>						

Section 2 - Where we want to be

1. Is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child an appropriate statement to commit to?

Yes	Yes	No		Not sure		
Comments:						

2. Do you agree with the six overarching priorities?

Yes		No		Not sure	Not sure	
Comments:						
<p>1/. They are fine in themselves, yet for all of them to work well early intervention is key. It is not clear how this approach can be better expressed as a priority – the bow tie of need / intervention will not change without this!</p> <p>2/. Agreed as headings, there are some doubts about their individual interpretation later in the document. This is covered in comments on the action section.</p>						

3. Does the Plan adequately identify the vulnerable groups?

Yes		No		Not sure	Not sure	
Comments:						
<p>Agreed if “Children and young people with learning difficulties and / or disabilities” covers physical disability.</p>						

Section 3 - What you can expect

1. Do you agree with the concept of promises to children and young people?

Yes		No	No	Not sure		
Comments:						
<p>The “promises” are laudable and very good aspirations for the future of services for children in Hampshire. However using the expression “promises” is a hostage to fortune. Some are out of the partnership’s control, are at the mercy of external change and indeed may require wider changes in society to deliver. It is not appropriate to heighten expectations. A desire to come up with a different expression than “Aims” or “Goals” is understood but “Promises” is too highly charged, particularly in a CYP context.</p>						

2. Do you agree with the promise made to **all** children and young people?

Is it: (a) appropriate? (b) realistic? (c) sufficiently challenging?

Yes		No		Not sure	Not sure	
Comments:						
<p>It is great that there is some passion about the language. The “not sure” comment comes from the fact that there isn’t a reflection of the five pillars of ECM – especially as this is for all children.</p> <p>It emerges again later but this “promise” seems to offer a great deal about enjoyment and positive activities, yet when it comes to actions later on, the language and activity becomes dour and “problem” based.</p>						

3. Do you agree with the promises made to vulnerable children and young people?

Are they: (a) appropriate? (b) realistic? (c) sufficiently challenging?

Yes		No	No	Not sure		
Comments:						
<p>The promise to make care placements in or near your local community needs careful consideration. In the majority of cases the intention would be sound. However this is the opposite of what may happen to some children at risk. They may well deliberately be placed out of area for their own safety.</p>						

4. Do you agree with the promise to parents and carers?

Is it: (a) appropriate? (b) realistic? (c) sufficiently challenging?

Yes		No		Not sure	Not sure	
Comments:						
The language suggests that parents are a problem and need support. Presuming this is actually not the belief, there could be an opening statement along the lines of: "Parents do a great job, although sometimes we know that you value having access to support".....and lead from there.						

5. Do you agree with the promise to communities?

Is it: (a) appropriate? (b) realistic? (c) sufficiently challenging?

Yes		No		Not sure	Not sure	
Comments:						
It can be hard to make the connection between this text and specific CYP issues. It is more like a Sustainable Community Strategy statement. If it were about ensuring the role and needs of CYP are taken account of in local communities, that might be more obviously connected to the Plan.						

Section 4 – Making a difference

1. Do you agree with the strategies for the delivery of the Plan?

Yes	Yes	No		Not sure		
Comments:						
Some of these need consideration and further action on the ground. There appears to be gaps in service, or a need for further resources, for those not receiving specialist services but a long way across the windscreen of need (ie more priority for early intervention).						

2. Are there other strategies that should be considered?

Yes	Yes	No		Not sure		
Comments:						
. P25 – Safeguarding – There is scope to improve the Area multi agency forums and those in localities. Standards are needed for running them to include: jargon free, appropriately chaired, timely and well run. The hallmarks of a good partnership should be revisited and applied to these Boards so that all that attend feel included, able to participate and it is good use of their time.						

3. Does the Plan provide sufficient strategic direction for partnership working?

Yes		No		Not sure	Not sure	
Comments:						
P 22 - There should be a clearer exposition of the role of locality 0-19 Partnerships. P25 – Capacity – this section does not recognise the skills in the Anti Social Behaviour workforce. They often recognise the symptoms of unhappy and at risk children through their behaviour in the Community. They also play a vital role in preventing young people landing up in the Criminal justice system by very early intervention.						

4. Does the Plan adequately explain the difference individuals/partners can make?

Yes		No	No	Not sure		
Comments:						
Comments are made throughout this response noting where there is scope for more reference to the role of other agencies.						

Section 5 – Making it happen

1. Do you agree with the actions identified in the Improvement Plan? Is there anything missing? (Please remember this Plan aims to provide an **overarching** framework)

Yes	Yes	No	Not sure		
Comments:					
<p>There does not seem to be a reference to greater engagement of children and young people in decisions / services – this is something which the Plan wants – how is it to be given effect?</p> <p>P37 – Reduce Substance misuse – this section does not recognise the role of the District Councils who are the alcohol licensing authority in abuse particularly of alcohol. Many use a joined up approach of their licensing, health and safety and Community Safety teams to tackle this. This section also need to reflect the role of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in funding and delivering interventions on drugs, alcohol and solvent abuse.</p> <p>P38 2.3 – Section needs to recognise the long standing work by a District on public health and health development and the work of the various Health and Wellbeing Boards across the County and their potential to assist.</p> <p>P39 2.5 – Section should reflect the work of Health and Wellbeing boards across the County, also the important role of leisure centres in health and wellbeing eg exercise prescription etc.</p> <p>P45 3.4 – Section needs to recognise role of Anti Social Behaviour co-ordinators, Safer Neighbourhoods Teams</p> <p>P46 4.1, p53/54 5.3 – please recognise role of CDRP and ASB co-ordinators</p> <p>P50 Priority 5 – it is disappointing that the Promise of “enjoyment” is not realised in this section. Understandably the Plan is one which focuses on deficit / gaps / absence of But it is a shame that three of the four actions are to do with gaps in attainment, offending and violence. There is one bullet point about celebration and positive activities. This is a missed opportunity to take the theme of “enjoyment” and make more of it. The last two “whats” might be moved to Priority 4 and really emphasise the positive elements behind this priority</p> <p>P54 5.4 – role of voluntary sector is significant in this area of work</p> <p>P56- Priority 6 – there should be specific reference to transport as a key access issue – it is one of the most significant priorities in the whole agenda.</p>					

General

1. Do you have any other comments on the Children and Young People's Plan?

Yes	Yes	No		Not sure		
Comments:						
<p>Whilst most professionals will know the relationships between the Plan and LAA – there is probably room for a short piece on how this Plan connects into other arenas / policies.</p> <p>There is no mention of Housing Tenancy staff and their roles in keeping families with children in appropriate housing. It is known that local children can end up placed in B and B in Slough.</p> <p>In general little mention of the police Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the role they can play in identifying vulnerable families</p>						

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires should be sent to the address shown below by 5 January 2009.

Send by post to:

Children and Young People's Plan Consultation
 Children's Services Department Enquiries
 Hampshire County Council
 Ashburton Court East
 Winchester
 SO23 8UG

OR send by email to:

childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk