

Cabinet Meeting

30 November 2016

Report title	Improving Outcomes within the Early Years	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Val Gibson Children and Young People	
Key decision	Amber	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Linda Sanders, People	
Originating service	Children and Young People	
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Report to be/has been considered by	People leadership Team Strategic Executive Board	31 October 2016 15 November 2016

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. To approve that consultation commence on the draft Early Years Strategy with stakeholders as part of the City's approach to improving outcomes within the early years.

Recommendation(s) for noting:

Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The City's Definition of School Readiness contained within the strategy will be consulted upon as part of this process.
2. Consultation will take place with stakeholders through written and face to face briefings and the completion of Survey Monkey questionnaires. Parents' views will be captured face to face, as much as is possible, utilising the Parent Champions and the Universal Practitioner.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet on the progress made toward developing a draft Early Years Strategy which will improve outcomes for children and families from conception to age five.

2.0 Background and Rationale

- 2.1 The report submitted to the Executive Team in June 2016 sought agreement for the development of an Early Years strategy, as part of the next phase of the re-design of Early Intervention and Prevention.
- 2.2 In order to secure rapid and sustained improvement of outcomes for children within the early years, the Early Years Strategy would identify and outline key activity during the child's life from conception to five years and what needs to be developed to support improvement.
- 2.3 Partners would support this transformation through involvement in a project group and themed task and finish groups with transformation delivered through a framework of eight early year's forums.
- 2.4 These forums will be co-terminus with existing learning communities, bringing together early intervention and prevention, education, health, parent champions and other partners that come into contact with pregnant women through to statutory school age children. These forums would provide robust peer challenge to drive improvement.
- 2.5 The report also highlighted the need to establish a city wide data collection system to gather data at key points in a child's life so that all partners understand the key areas for improvement within early years.
- 2.6 Resource was also approved to support settings in embedding a consistent approach to using good assessment and data as a tool for accelerating children's progress.
- 2.7 The recommendation that any future commissioning of health visiting should set a clear expectation of them having the key function of supporting parents to understand child development was also endorsed.

3.0 Local Context

- 3.1 Wolverhampton currently has 64 schools and 48 Private, Voluntary and Independent settings delivering nursery education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds, 88% of which are judged as good or outstanding.
- 3.2 The City strives through the work of the Early Help Service and School Improvement and Standards Team, to ensure that schools, settings, childminders and all early year's providers are delivering high quality early year's experiences. The Ofsted ratings for the

city continue to rise annually and the figures shown below for all providers within the City demonstrates this growth.

Provider type	Good	Outstanding	Awaiting Inspection
Childminders	69%	19%	0%
Playgroups	54%	0%	36%
Day nurseries	63%	17%	12%
Nursery schools	43%	57%	0%

- 3.3 Within primary schools who have received a separate judgement for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 70% of schools are judged to be good or outstanding.
- 3.4 However, the statutory assessment outcomes at the end of the key stage Early Year's Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) do not reflect these judgments as although Wolverhampton's % of children achieving a good level of development (GLD) continues to rise annually; we do not meet the national % GLD. Provisional data for 2016 shows Wolverhampton achieved a GLD of 63%, a shortfall of 6% against the national figure of 69%.
- 3.5 This provides a compelling argument for ensuring our early years offer is supporting the long term outcomes of children and ultimately building an economically active population.
- #### 4.0 Progress
- 4.1 A multi- agency project group has been established to oversee the development of the Early Years Strategy with all partners represented. The project group identified the themes it wished to address and time limited task and finish groups were established to develop outcome focused action plans.
- 4.2 The strategy and action plans outline what the outcomes will be for parents and children in each of these areas, the responsibilities of early year's professionals and the tasks that will need to be carried out.
- 4.3 The strategy also includes case studies of good and effective intervention and practice and aims to build upon the many examples of good work within the early years sector, improving it and embedding it so that all children regardless of their early year's journey experiences the best possible start.
- 4.4 The four themes the project group identified were
- 4.4.1 Good Maternal Health: This theme focuses on ensuring there is a consistency of approach to the delivery of Health services for families with a clear pathway from conception to age five, outlining what families can expect from professional services.

- 4.4.2 Parental Engagement: This theme focuses on developing the provision of universal services for families in order to support parental engagement in services and improve parenting skills.
 - 4.4.3 High Quality Education: This theme focuses on developing high quality education ensuring that all children have access to high quality pre-school experiences which will enhance and improve their outcomes.
 - 4.4.4 Workforce Development: This theme focuses on challenging and supporting schools to provide the best education for children and young people through developing a highly skilled early year's workforce with strong and effective leadership.
- 4.5 A draft definition of School Readiness has been developed to support providers in their work with children and families prior to their attending statutory education and most importantly to support children in their learning journey.

“Children will be able to express their needs, feelings and wants. A school will ensure that children feel heard and understood by their practitioners. Children will be excited, enthused and demonstrate a willingness to learn both inside and outside of the classroom”.

- 4.6 This definition will be consulted upon with parents, providers and partners over the coming weeks.
- 4.7 Data Collection remains a challenge for early years. In order to understand the impact the strategy will have on outcomes, a robust system for the collection, analysis, sharing and use of data is being established. The system for collection needs to be simple, effective and produce useful data that supports tracking of outcomes at a number of levels, city, locality, setting and child.
- 4.8 System change is also crucial and the next phase of integrating the council's offer is the requirement for partners to effect change in order to achieve whole system change.

5.0 Success Measures

- 5.1 A comprehensive performance framework is being developed as part of the strategy to measure its success. Some high level indicators of success have been established to drive the strategy developments which are set out below:
 - 5.1.1 As a minimum, by the academic year 2017/18, children will attain in line with national expectations within the foundation stage. The gap between those children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium compared to those not receiving Early Years Pupil Premium will be less than 10%.
 - 5.1.2 A robust transition protocol, including sharing of data, will be established by the end of the 2016/17 academic year.

5.2 Early Years forums have been established and are now operational from the beginning of the 2016/17 academic year with a clear programme for improving outcomes.

6.0 Challenge and Feedback

6.1 The strategy will be performance managed internally by the Education Board and externally by the Strengthening Families Board and the Children's Trust Board.

6.2 At its meeting in September 2016 the Children's Trust Board as part of its spotlighting process, received a report and presentation on the Early Years Strategy. The Board uses the spotlighting process to look in more depth at issues that are of interest to all partners and has on its forward plan a number of cross cutting pieces of work.

6.3 With regard to this strategy, the Board also has a challenge and monitoring role and used this agenda item to perform that function as well as noting the progress to date. Feedback from the Board was positive.

7.0 Next Steps

7.1 From the point of conception through to the first day at school, parents, babies and young children have regular contact with a range of different services including midwifery, Health Visiting, General Practitioners (GPs), children centres, childcare and early education provision.

7.2 Getting this contact and the services right in these critical years is crucial for ensuring that parents at risk of struggling with their young children are supported sufficiently and that all babies and children are given the best possible start in life. All partners have a role to play in this approach.

7.3 Health Services: Public Health is currently developing the tender specification for the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme through Health Visiting. Part of the national specification for Health Visitors is that they have 5 key contacts from the ante-natal period until the child is 2 ½ years old. As experts in child development and the only service mandated to have contact with all children under five, it is imperative that the commissioning specification is developed with the aim of empowering parents to support their child's learning and development from birth. Building upon the pathway currently in place the new specification aims to clearly set out what the expectations are in respect of parent education during the five key contacts.

7.4 A current key contact is the 2–2 ½ year development check. Early Intervention and Prevention and Health Visiting colleagues have worked together to develop an integrated two year old assessment for all children accessing two year old funded nursery places. This aims to bring together the development checks undertaken by Health Visitors and summative judgements by early years providers in one easy to understand report for a parent that helps them understand where their child is at in terms of development. This will

engage parents in their child's learning through clearly communicating what the next steps are for a child and how they can support them.

- 7.5 Early Years Services: As part of the recent transformation programme re-design a team of universal services officers have been retained. This team will be central to supporting the targeting of identified groups of children and parents and delivering one to one and group interventions with the explicit remit of supporting parents understanding of child development and how they can support their child's progress. This will be achieved through modelling interventions as well as providing access to high quality information.
- 7.6 There are already many high quality early years practitioners across the City who are supporting other members of the childcare workforce to develop their skills within provisions but more needs to be done. Research demonstrates that inspirational practitioners' providing stimulating and challenging environments supports children in accelerating their learning.
- 7.7 Schools and childcare providers will be challenged and supported to deliver the best education they can for children and young people. Model environments will focus on strengthening leadership and management with progress monitored during quality support visits. A highly skilled early years workforce with strong and effective leadership and management will raise the quality of learning environments ensuring that settings receive either good or outstanding Ofsted judgements.
- 7.8 Through the promotion of focused early years forums the workforce will be supported to share and disseminate good practice, building effective working relationships with other partners such as Wolverhampton University, City of Wolverhampton College and Adult Education Services, to provide a consistent approach in developing high quality early years practice. Regular monitoring of the quality of early years practitioners entering the workforce and maintaining a continuous cycle of staff development within provision, will assist in ensuring the stability and quality of practitioners.
- 7.9 Parental Engagement: A parent champion programme has recently been established within the Early Intervention Service in close working partnership with the Adult Education Service to develop a six week induction programme covering role and expectations, communication and safeguarding. Eight volunteers have been recruited with the main role at present to promote the benefits of 2 year nursery provision and to support parents in choosing a setting for their child.
- 7.10 The key role for the parent champion programme will be developing a network of parents who are willing to provide a peer support role to other parents with the aim of developing their confidence in parenting. It is envisaged that the current parent champions will support parents in making choices about selecting a setting for their child and what to look for, promoting the benefits of nursery education and act as an advocate for parent child interactions such as reading together. The parent champions will also be instrumental in guiding parents to access community resources and building wider community networks which support resilience within families.

- 7.11 Economic Services: Wolverhampton is a City where economic growth and prosperity is a top priority for the Council and its partners. Across the city there is over £3.6 billion investment either on site or planned, which in turn will support thousands of new jobs. The City is home to global players such as UTC Aerospace Systems, Moog, Jaguar Land Rover, TATA Steel and Carillion, who also play an integral part of the local economy. The City's wider business base has increasingly diversified and Wolverhampton is now currently home to over 8,000 companies across a broad spectrum of industries. There is no shortage of opportunity in Wolverhampton; the biggest concern now is to ensure that employers can attract the skilled labour they want and that local people benefit from the opportunities available to them.
- 7.12 In order to compete in the labour market, and progress in the world of work, local people need the education, skills and determination to succeed. The statistics show that currently many local people struggle. The early years are crucial in fulfilling Wolverhampton's ambition when the foundations for this growth can be robustly laid. Families can also be supported to develop their skills and their opportunities for employment.
- 7.13 The delivery landscape is confusing and difficult to navigate, for both residents and businesses and therefore a single portal where residents and businesses can access information on jobs and skills has been established. The Wolverhampton Work Box will be a virtual system offering a single point of access where families can complete basic skills self-assessments, and access careers advice.
- 7.14 Job brokerage will be offered to parents and carers to enable easier access to jobs. There will be improved access to relevant skills for people and businesses to ensure there are effective opportunities in place for those furthest from the labour market to gain qualifications, soft skills, work experience, volunteering, on the job training and obtain basic skills in numeracy and literacy.
- 7.15 A coordinated city wide apprenticeships offer is also being developed. This will support business growth, raise skills levels and boost progression rates and earnings. Through collaboration, apprenticeships will become a very significant investment tool to drive growth and support the health of key local sectors as well as provide quality work based routes for young people into a range of exciting careers in the local area.

8.0 Financial implications

- 8.1 The approved budget for 2016/17 for the Early Years Service is £496,000.
- 8.2 Any costs associated with the development of the Early Years Strategy will be contained within this budget allocation.
[NM/22112016/Q]

9.0 Legal implications

9.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

[Legal Code: TS/22112016/A]

10.0 Equalities implications

10.1 Ensuring that every child gets the best start in life has been a key aspiration outlined within early years policy for the past 10 years. The proposals set out within this report seek to ensure that no child, regardless of background, is disadvantaged in the educational outcomes they are able to secure.

11.0 Environmental implications

11.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

12.0 Human resources implications

12.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

13.0 Corporate landlord implications

13.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

14.0 Schedule of background papers

14.1 11 November 2015 Cabinet Meeting - Children Services Re-design
24 February 2016 Cabinet Meeting - Children Services Re-design.

This report is PUBLIC
[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]