

Report for Resolution

Report to Executive
1 October 2008
Report of Head of Community Services
Subject Every Child Matters

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Purpose

To request that the Executive comments on progress and approves further actions which contribute to the Council implementing its responsibilities from Every Child Matters.

Recommendations

The Executive are requested to:

- (1) note the progress achieved to date
- (2) to confirm its commitment to Every Child Matters by agreeing further actions detailed in paragraph 6 of the report.

Financial Consequences

There are no direct financial consequences arising from this report

Risk Assessment

The Council has a range of obligations and responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 which includes those relating to safeguarding children. This report identifies the roles which the Council has to identify post holders to ensure it is meeting its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future” and the service plan priority to provide a service that will increase organisational capacity to implement the Council’s responsibilities under the Children’s Act 2004

Executive Member: Councillor Sands - Children and Young People

Ward: All

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

None

Report

Background

1. At its meeting on the 24 January 2007, the Executive received a report on the City Council's obligations and responsibilities under "Every Child Matters" and the Children Act 2004 and endorsed an action plan to ensure it met these obligations.
2. A significant amount of cross Council and service based work has been undertaken to ensure the Council is meeting its obligations and working within the spirit of the five Every Child Matters outcomes, which are that every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, have the support they need to:
 - Be healthy
 - Stay safe
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Make a positive contribution
 - Achieve economic well-being
3. The cross Council work that the City Council has completed is as follows:
 - (a) Identified a Lead Member "the Children's Champion." Council has recently appointed Cllr Sands as the Executive Member for Children and Young People.
 - (b) Identified the Assistant Director Neighbourhood Development as the Council's Lead Officer for Children and Young People and act as the Designated Officer for Children and Young People.
 - (c) Identified the Head of Community Services as the Council's deputy Designated Officer for Children and Young People.
 - (d) Identified the Organisational Change and Development Team Leader as the named officer for the management of allegations against staff
 - (e) Identified the Assistant Director Neighbourhood Services as the named officer for risk management, exchanging information and working together for public protection.
 - (f) Adopted a Child Protection Policy and Procedures, implementing an awareness raising programme and identifying and implementing training needs across the Council.
 - (g) Embedded Every Child Matters into Service Planning.
4. A range of service based work has also been undertaken. This includes:
 - (a) the adoption of a Play Strategy for Norwich;
 - (b) secured £310,000 play lottery funding for play provision in Norwich;
 - (c) involving young children and families in the development of new play facilities;
 - (d) developing a safer parks initiative to make parks safer for children, young people and families;
 - (e) continued the successful delivery of the Kidzones programme throughout

- the school summer holiday's; free activities have been programmed for children from Tuesday until Sunday, which provides affordable opportunities for families;
- (f) engaging in social, cultural and educational activities in their neighbourhood;
 - (g) developing the ChildPlay (weekend summer events) and ChildPlay (events including a playbus, face painting etc for children under 6 years of age at the neighbourhood level);
 - (h) securing £100,000 per year for three years from the Youth Task Force to provide integrated and targeted youth support services for vulnerable young people and which will contribute to the Local Area Agreement (LAA) target of reducing the number of first time entrants into the youth justice system;
 - (i) increasing the reach of the Families Unit which provides support to the most vulnerable families in the City and who are at risk of losing their tenancy;
 - (j) developed the Sure Futures programme in Catton Grove and Mile Cross which uses creative arts to develop the talents and aspirations of 11 to 16 year olds; the programme is also able to provide access to an accredited arts award;
 - (k) traffic calming schemes implemented on Angel Road between Angel Road infant and Junior Schools; Heigham Road outside St Johns RC infant school and outside Heartsease Infant and Junior Schools;
 - (l) crossing Improvements implemented for Colman Road Infant and Junior Schools;
 - (m) footway widening implemented outside Lakenham Primary School;
 - (n) road safety schemes implemented which will help children move about the City more safely: traffic calming Christchurch Road; New signalled crossing on Newmarket Road by Town Close Road; New signalled crossing on Mousehold Avenue by Corbett Avenue; pedestrian refuges of St Faiths Road to improve access to Catton Park;
 - (o) support provided for a schools enterprise education programme, Princes Trust Development Awards and Business Start-Up support for young people from the LEGI programme;
 - (p) support provided to NR5/Future Radio for engagement and skills development for young people excluded from mainstream education in 2007/08 from LEGI programme;
 - (q) Community Learning Mentors - skills and employment support for adults particularly courses around First Aid/Early Years First Aid, Food Hygiene and Child Psychology;
 - (r) contributed to the Norfolk wide joint protocol for youth homelessness (with District Councils, Children's Services, Connexions, Probation and the Youth Offending Team);
 - (s) the Youth homelessness Advisor has produced an information pack for young people which outlines the realities of living away from home and includes information such as, such as budgeting, what realistically their chances of getting accommodation are, how choice based lettings works etc, which will be available shortly;
 - (t) contributed to countywide research to produce a Young Persons Housing Strategy with colleagues from Supporting People and District Councils;
 - (u) contributed to the development of a countywide domestic violence pack for schools about raising awareness for children who may be in a

- situation at home where domestic violence is occurring or have friends who may be suffering the effects of domestic violence.
- (v) developing a Norwich focussed education pack which will be targeted at young people who are excluded or not attending school;
 - (w) the Greater Norwich Youth Homelessness Forum has completed a toolkit for youth homelessness called Home truths which was launched in May.

Anti-bullying strategy

5. Norfolk County Council has recently adopted an anti-bullying strategy, which recognises that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and should not be tolerated.
6. The strategy, a copy of which is included in the appendices, sets out a range of objectives some of which are directly related to the work of the County Council. The strategy also recognises that other agencies and organisations have a role to play in tackling bullying and through the Norfolk Children and Young People's Partnership the County Council has requested that partners including the City Council support the strategy and agree up to three actions that the City Council will contribute to its implementation.
7. The actions that the Executive are now requested to agree are:
 - All Council staff to be briefed on the issues of bullying and aims and objectives of the anti-bullying strategy
 - Through the Safer Parks Initiative, neighbourhood wardens, parks and open spaces officers and other staff to be proactive in ensuring that the City's parks and open spaces are a safe and bully free environment to play
 - The Council's neighbourhood's staff that are most likely to come into contact with bullying and where it is observed be required to report it to the Neighbourhood Wardens or Safer Neighbourhood Teams for appropriate action. More serious occurrences will be reported through the Council's safeguarding procedures

Appendix 1

Norfolk County Council - Norfolk Anti-Bullying Strategy

Together we can stop bullying!

Norfolk County Council is committed to tackling bullying.

We believe that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and should not be tolerated. We want children and young people to be and feel safe from bullying and discrimination. We also want everyone who works with children and young people to take bullying seriously and know how to resolve it positively. We seek to empower them to challenge, remedy and prevent bullying, creating a culture where every child and young person is treated with dignity and respect and takes seriously their responsibility to treat others in the same way.

We are recognised nationally as a local authority with good practice, including our:

- Multi-agency collaboration, including events for Anti-Bullying Week
- Training/conferences on a broad range of anti-bullying themes
- Support for vulnerable groups, eg gay, lesbian and bisexual young people and children with disabilities, including Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Involvement of children and young people through peer support schemes, forum theatre and work of exceptional young people such as 'Just Smile'
- Support for parental complaints E-safety and cyberbullying initiatives
- Work with the Anti-Bullying Alliance. Our chair of the Norfolk Anti-Bullying Forum is the Eastern Regional Adviser for the Anti-Bullying Alliance

Bullying is a deliberately hurtful act by an individual or group, usually repeated over a period of time. It often involves an abuse of power or use of intimidation and can affect an individual or a group. **Bullying isn't** when children and young people of a similar age and size find themselves in conflict, without an imbalance of power or use of intimidation.

National research confirms that bullying is a major concern for young people, their parents and carers and we believe everyone shares the responsibility to address it.

We want children and young people to take advantage of opportunities to:

- Value themselves, their achievements and develop strong self-esteem
- Practice and develop emotional resilience and social skills to manage their feelings and work with others to resolve conflicts calmly
- Be actively involved in anti-bullying initiatives such as peer support

We want children and young people, parents and carers in Norfolk to:

- Know that we take bullying seriously and want to work in partnership to reduce it
- Understand what bullying is and how to prevent and respond to it
- Feel safe in their communities and confident that they will be listened to and incidents will be dealt with

- Be informed so that they know what to do, where to get help and how to support others who are bullied or bully
- Be able to influence Norfolk's anti-bullying strategy and the local policy of their own particular setting
- Celebrate differences and choose not to bully or discriminate against others
- Recognise other people's feelings and treat others with respect

We want all settings working with children and young people to:

Policy and ethos

- Encourage and reflect inclusion in their policies, organisation, ethos, community links, partnerships, curriculum and teaching and learning
- Be aware of their legal duties and responsibilities to reduce and respond to bullying in and outside their setting
- Identify a named coordinator for anti-bullying issues where appropriate
- Have an up-to-date anti-bullying policy that addresses all forms of bullying and sets out clearly a commitment to preventing and responding to it
- Work with other organisations in developing and implementing an effective policy
- Monitor, evaluate and update the policy regularly. Review the effectiveness of prevention and responses to bullying

Behaviour

- Promote, encourage, expect and praise good behaviour, adopting a 'zero tolerance' to bullying
- Ensure that staff are respectful in all their dealings with children and young people and don't use bullying tactics like sarcasm and derogatory names or abuse their power

Knowledge and skills

- Ensure that everyone understands about bullying including the four different forms it takes (physical, verbal, indirect and cyber), the damage it does, what to do about it and where support exists
- Use the curriculum to teach children and young people to understand what bullying is, how to deal with it and how to build emotional resilience, empathy and self-esteem
- Train all staff to respond promptly and firmly when dealing with incidents and know the breadth of rewards, sanctions and strategies
- Tailor responses to particular forms of bullying and ensure that vulnerable groups susceptible to bullying are supported
- Provide and encourage a safe, listening environment so that children and young people feel able to report bullying anonymously or face-to-face and know that it will be dealt with effectively
- Provide strategies to support both those who are bullied and those who bully and to help bystanders to become part of the solution

Monitor and review

- Inform parents and carers about procedures to follow in the event of bullying and the support they can expect to get
- Monitor and record bullying incidents and gather relevant data to inform evaluation of practice and show how the setting is attempting to reduce bullying and bullying behaviours

To achieve this we will:

1. Develop strategic partnerships that:

- Adopt our Norfolk County Council policy, or reflect it in their own policies and identify how they will put this into practice
- Recognise the importance of the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes so that children work without fear, achieve through enjoyment, lack mental and physical stress, feel part of the school and local community, and leave as contented young adults ready to take part in the next stage of their lives
- Work collaboratively to achieve the annual anti-bullying targets identified in the Children and Young People's Plan
- Secure the best outcomes for children and young people by preventing and responding to bullying and reducing the frequency of bullying incidents. The Norfolk Anti-Bullying Forum, which meets twice termly, will be where Norfolk partners will meet to further develop and monitor the strategy
- Communicate, share and circulate the Anti-Bullying Strategy widely
- Make sure that children, young people, families and carers are engaged and clear about procedures

2. Create environments where children and young people feel safe respected and valued, where bullying behaviour cannot flourish. To achieve this we will:

- Ensure that all settings work to a shared understanding of what bullying is what it is not and promote the definition within their communities
- Recommend or provide guidance and information on addressing bullying for settings, children and young people, their families and other relevant organisations
- Provide coordinated multi-agency training for all key professionals on strategies and procedures for preventing and responding to bullying, including support for those who bully and the bullied
- Promote a whole-school approach to addressing bullying
- Teach children and young people the skills of mutual respect and co-operation through the use of Social Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials in primary and in secondary schools, R Time in primary settings and other relevant curricular approaches through Personal Social Health Education and Employment and Citizenship
- In schools, work jointly with national strategies such as the Healthy Norfolk Schools Programme and primary and secondary behaviour and attendance strategy, which promote ways of developing a whole school culture where children feel emotionally safe

- Promote concepts and practices such as Solution Focused and Restorative Approaches in our settings
- Give schools advice on how to run effective and sustainable peer support approaches
- Offer advice on how to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policies

3. Encourage best practice by:

- Collating and circulating information and best practice and help embed it
- Taking part in annual events like national anti-bullying week
- Raising awareness and understanding of specific types of bullying, such as racist, homophobic, SEN and disablist and cyberbullying through focused working groups, which we will use to inform good practice in Norfolk

4. Monitor the impact of the strategy and influence its future direction by:

- Collating information annually on the incidence and impact of bullying and anti-bullying policy and practice
- Gathering information about the participation of young people in anti-bullying work, such as buddy systems and peer support and involvement in events such as anti-bullying week activities
- Analysing a range of data which can inform our work such as racist incidents, parental complaints, records of attendance where bullying is a factor of non-attendance and exclusions data

5. Ensure children and young people's participation by:

- Seeking opportunities to promote participation of children and young people in all aspects of anti-bullying work at local, regional and national levels
- A big thank you to all our partner agencies who contributed to this strategy and to everyone who has shown their commitment to signing up to it and telling us what actions they are going to take. To sign up to the strategy please fill in and return to me as soon as possible.